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ISSUE 32
JULY 1990

The Games machine

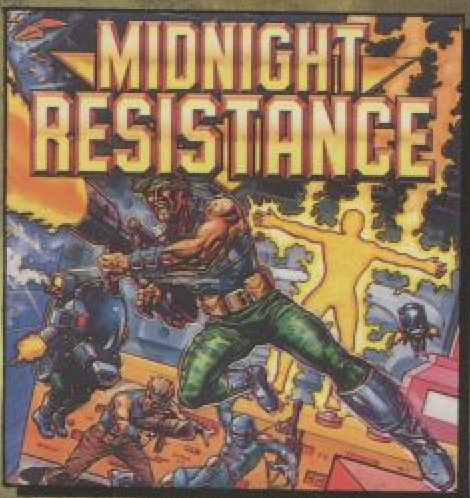
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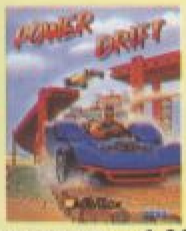
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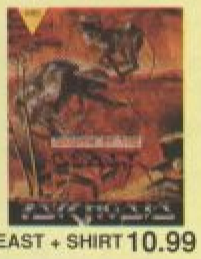
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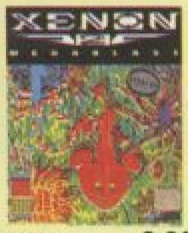
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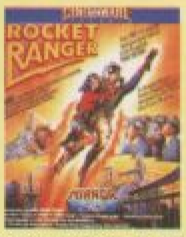


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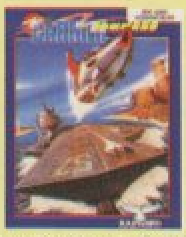
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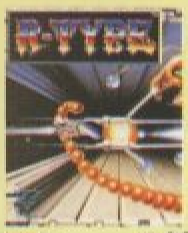
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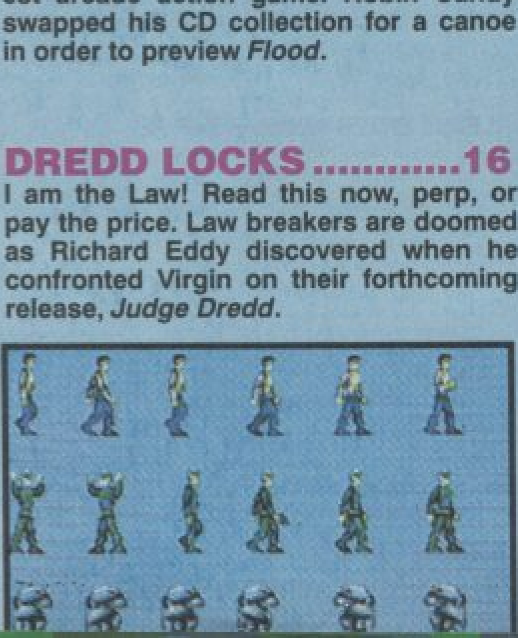
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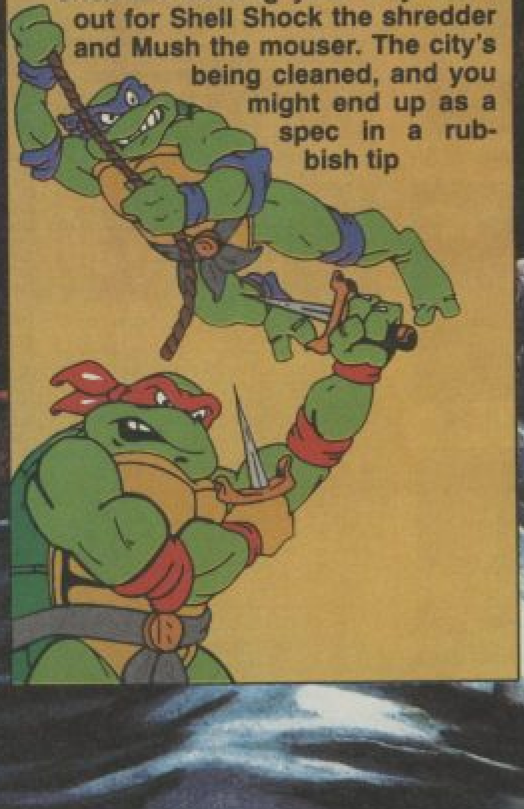
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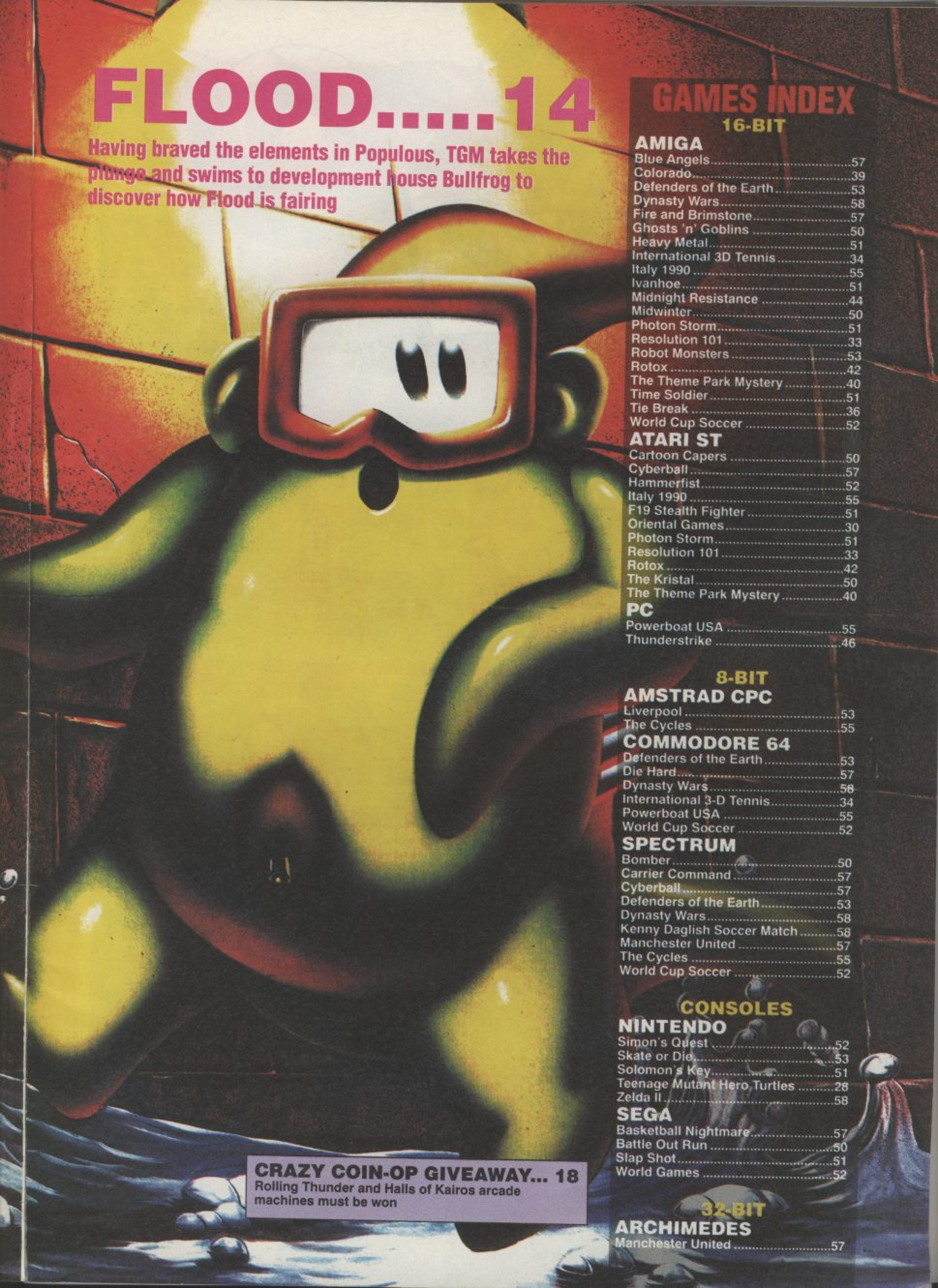


FEATURES

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Having braved the elements in Populous, TGM takes the plunge and swims to development house Bullfrog to discover how Flood is fairing

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CRAZY COIN-OP GIVEAWAY... 18
Rolling Thunder and Halls of Kairos arcade machines must be won



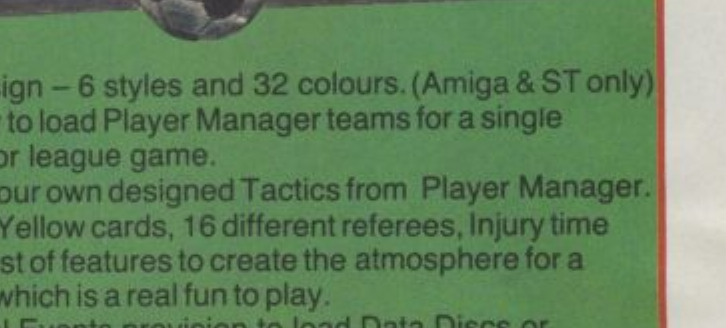
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BOOT-UP

THE CORPORATE IMAGE

Previously a software development house, Core Design enter the cut-throat world of software publishing in July with the release of Corporation, their first game under the Core software label. TGM checked out their credentials



■ You'll find more useful items in Corporation than on the conveyor belt of the Generation Game! Five guns, three batteries, power plug, power pack, disrupter sheet, two grenades, bomb, lockpick, holograms, Scanman, smartcard, compass, suits, two masks, goggles, dispensor, food... no cuddly toy (aw!).

You may not have realised it, but you've probably played a Core Design game before. Its programming team has created *Impossamole*, *Axel's Magic Hammer*, *Switchblade*, *Action Fighter*, *Dynamite Dux* and the game that made them great: *Rick Dangerous*. But now it's time for something much deeper as Core Design fast forward into a science-fiction future, the setting for their latest game, *Corporation*.

First, the plot (and there's a closet SF novelist in Core Design somewhere), which goes something like this...

Universal Cybernetics Corporation (UCC) have become the most powerful industrial force by creating a series of incredibly successful robots that look and act like humans. They have also taken over a wide range of companies during their progress. In the year 2030 you can, in fact, fit out your whole house to run on UCC products.

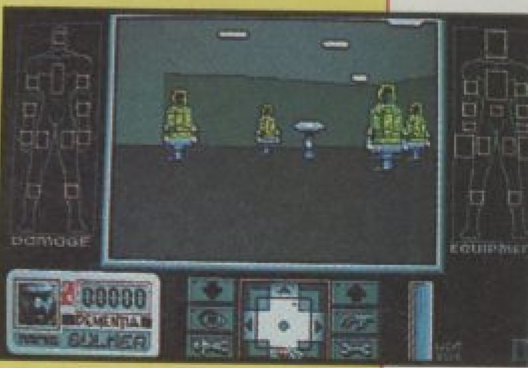
But such dominance has created suspicion in government circles, who have become worried that the resources available to UCC could be used to genetically create the ultimate killing machine. Top international espionage company, Zodiac, are called in to infiltrate UCC's HQ and bring back an embryo from their genetic experiments. As a top Zodiac secret agent, you step forward to help the government.

So there you are, at the entrance to UCC's heavily-guarded factory. The building is littered with hi-tech, light-sensitive alarms and video cameras. Human, robot and alien life forms patrol the corridors. Take a step and the filled, 3-D scenery moves past you.

Your initial objective is to locate the generator and fuse boxes. Once there, damaging the generator and disabling the alarm system will alert security droids who come and begin repairs, leaving your path relatively free to carry out your real mission: to locate the embryo.

Of course, by taking out the fuse box you knock out the lights. Just as well you've got thermal image and infra-red cameras, along with a decent map of the factory. Deeper in your bag you'll find a gas mask, medical kit, welding unit, armour, explosives, disguise kit and repair kit. Oh, there's five hand guns in there too, but you're not that kind of person, are you?

There's no doubting the challenge of *Corporation*. The whole structure is rigged up with video cameras, so you'll need to be on your guard at all times. Challenges you'll encounter include video cameras, pressure sensors, trip beams and hologram projectors which throw up fake images of guards. Falling for any of the traps activates the



internal defence system — doors automatically lock behind and in front of you and an invisible gas is pumped into the room rendering you unconscious.

Reckon you could cope with anything Core Design's SF nightmare throws at you? Find out in July when *Corporation* gets an airing on ST and Amiga, with a PC version following in September.



■ When the lights fail, use the thermal image camera — here's a enemy robot viewed through the lens.



STORM IN

The Sales Curve are well known in the software 'industry' for producing some of the best coin-op conversions around. However, their public image has failed to gain such stature. Previously, companies like Virgin Mastertronic have handled advertising and distribution for them, and have thus stolen some of their thunder. But now, with the launch of their Storm label, The Sales Curve are hoping to take more of the credit for their releases

Mention The Sales Curve to 'yer average computer owner' and you'd probably be met with a blank face soon after followed by some comment about 'not getting that far in Business Studies yet'. However, any mention of Ninja Warriors or Silkworm and the response may be more positive. Silkworm, in a single stroke, convinced 8-bit owners that 16-bit arcade conversions could, after all the derisory comments in computer magazines, be attractive and immensely playable. The Sales Curve quickly followed up their success with Ninja Warriors; similarly impressing all who'd played the arcade machine.

Being distributed by Virgin Mastertronic had its advantages — less hassle for a start — but it also meant the The Sales Curve's hits may be attributed to Virgin instead of their originators. Most software companies would be happy to take the royalties and avoid the fame — not these guys, though. And that's why The Sales Curve have set up Storm: a new label which they hope will heighten their profile and increase public awareness.

Dan Marchant (The Sales Curve's Product Manager): 'Until now we've been sorting out the licences for our games, organising the programming and visiting the magazines, while another software house handled the advertising, duplication and distribution. We knew that we could do those things too, so we thought why not go it alone and get all the credit for our work.

'Storm will have a strong image with distinctive packaging. Too many software houses package each product totally differently from the previous one. If you're in a computer store you can't tell at a glance if a game is by your favourite software house. Psygnosis have a particular package style which makes their games stand out on the shelves. Our packaging should have a similar effect.'

The Nineties will see The Sales Curve branching out into console development. They've already secured a deal with Nintendo which allows them to develop for the Famicom and the Game Boy. While they're also negotiating with Nintendo for a publishing deal whereby they can program and distribute they're own games (being allowed to develop for the NIntendo is exclusive but being allowed to market and distribute games is very rare). The Sales Curve are also looking at the possibilities of writing games for the Lynx and Sega systems.

To kick off the new label Storm have secured a major deal with arcade manufacturers Jaleco which gives them the rights to convert several of today's most popular games. First off is a conversion of Saint Dragon due in September.



ROD-LAND

Storm's first non shoot-'em-up release is another Jaleco licence. *Rod-land* is clearly aimed at fans of 'cute' games like *Rainbow Islands* and *Kid Gloves*. Taking control of one of two fairies with pointy ears, magic wands and magic shoes it's your task to move around the platforms collecting flowers and killing other nauseatingly cute creatures.

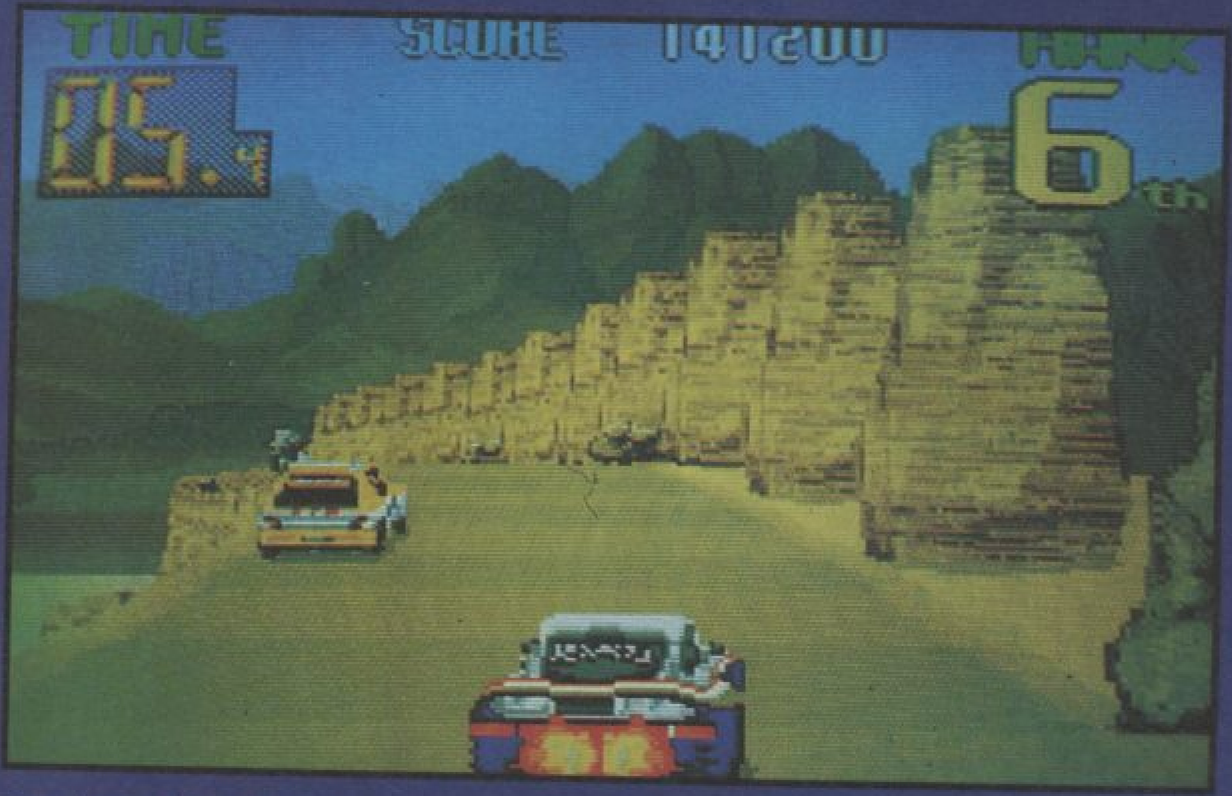
Despite their cuteness these fairies are fairly vicious. They use their magic wands to stun the baddies who they then pick up and kill by bashing them repeatedly against the floor. Once dead the baddies may leave behind bonus tokens, bullets or bombs which can be used to devastating effect on other nasties.

In the best tradition of cutesy games you are faced with a bigger and angrier baddie at the end of each level: a giant elephant on a trapeze appears on one level. You'll have to wait till the early part 1991 for this one.



A TEA CUP

BIG RUN



Storm's third licence from Jaleco is also set for an early 1991 release. Right from the start *Big Run* places you in the heat of things on the dust tracks of Tunis — it makes *Out Run* look like a Sunday afternoon drive.

Steering your super-tough rally car you've got to complete the toughest six stages of the Paris-Dakar rally in record time. Unlike other race games where even a slight knock can be fatal, your car has been built to last. However, every collision slows you down and there's a challenging time to beat. Still, sometimes you just have to shove 'em out the way, right! (CRASH's Nick 'One Way Street' Roberts should feel right at home — Ed.)



SAINT DRAGON

Despite its name, the arcade machine has no appearance of a fair wench in the clutches of an evil dragon. Moreover, the eponymous dragon isn't even evil! Turning tradition on its head, you have to rescue the dragon!

Set in outer space (no medieval huts or heavy armour as you'd expect), you pilot a heavy duty space fighter built in the form of a dragon. Trailing an armoured tail you've got to blast your way through six levels of progressively nastier aliens before you can rescue your winged chum.

As in other popular shoot-'em-ups you will be rewarded with additional weaponry if particular enemy craft are destroyed. Most people will quickly choose their own preferred weapons but certain stages require special weapons. However, one of the more original features of the game is the armoured tail; this acts as a shield against many of the aliens' weapons. Generally, only the dragon's head is vulnerable to enemy fire.

The conversion of *Saint Dragon* is being handled by the programming house Random Access, previously responsible for *Silkworm*. The graphics have been ported straight from the coin-op original and from what TGM has seen of the game it looks and plays every bit as good as the coin-op.

SWIV

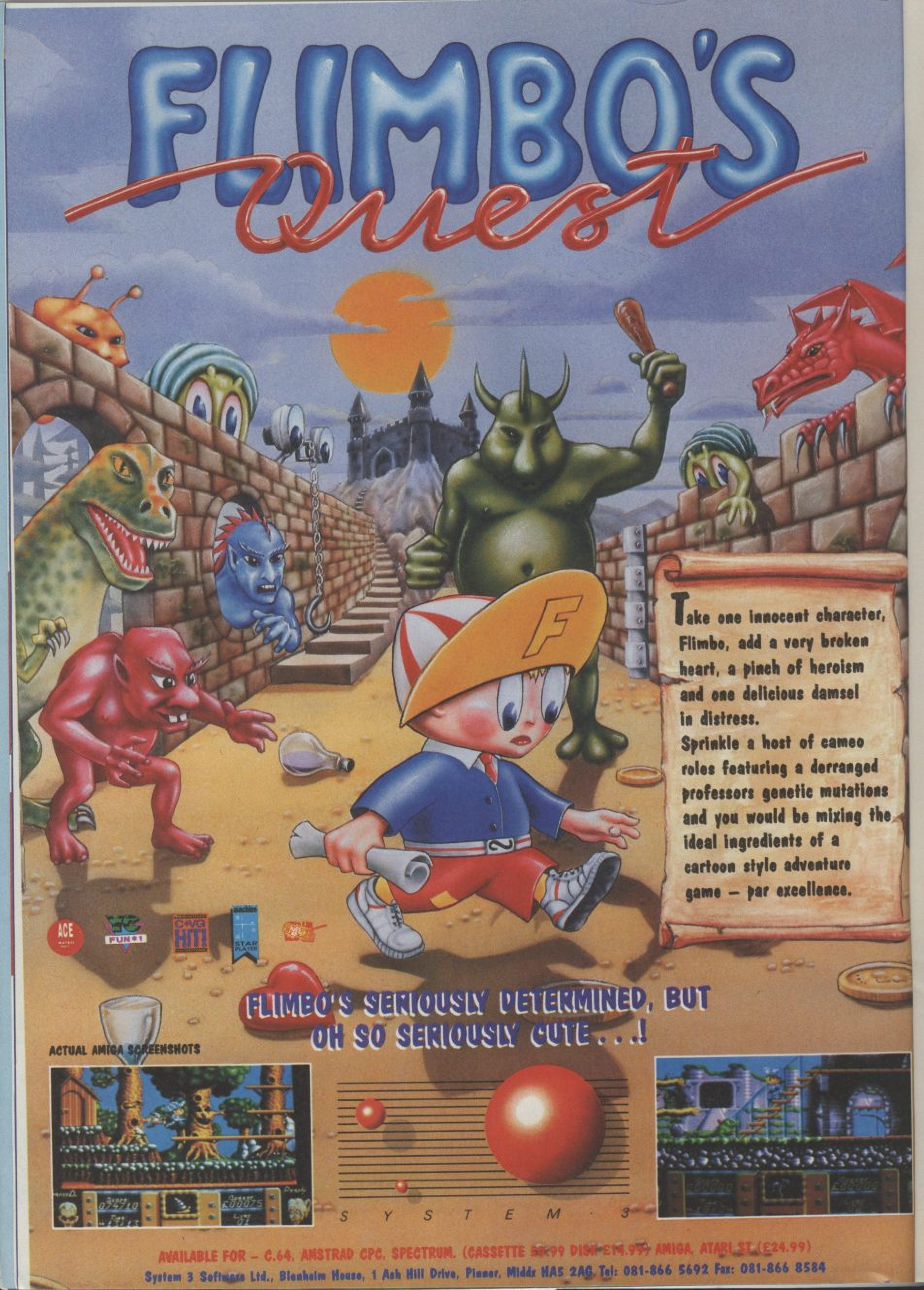
Lightning quick reactions are needed in Storm's second release. Of their four initial releases, *SWIV* is Storm's only original product. *SWIV* is billed as an 'original vertical shoot-'em-up to beat all shoot-'em-ups.'

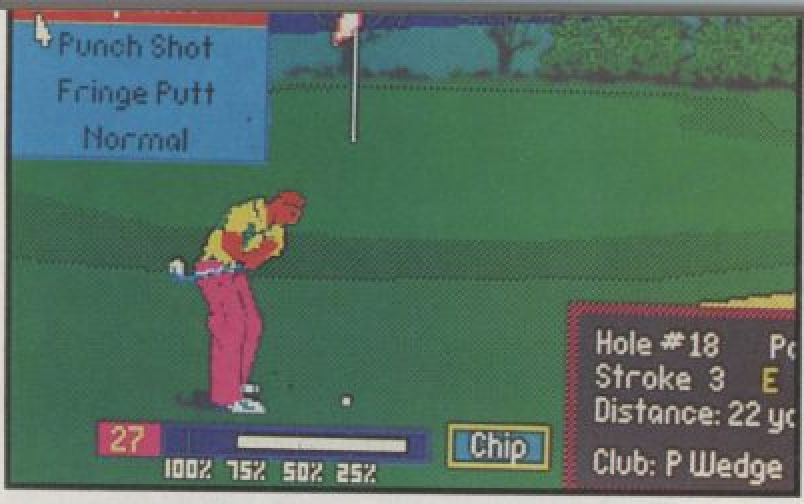
Controlling either jeep or a helicopter (shades of *Silkworm*?) you've got to battle your way through hordes of enemies, including multi-part copters, super tanks and strange bird-like craft.

Again Random Access are handling the coding. Due to the enormity of the game on the ST and Amiga they've created a special disk loading system which imports backgrounds and sprites while the game is playing. This gets rid of the annoying wait for the next level to load in after killing the big nasty.

SWIV should be released sometime in October. Expect to see a full review soon.



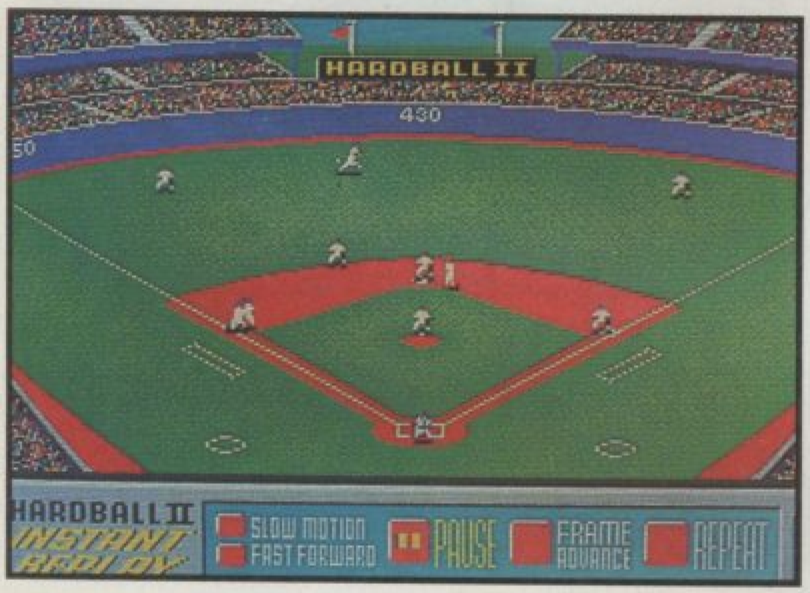

FLIMBO'S
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Take one innocent character, Flimbo, add a very broken heart, a pinch of heroism and one delicious damsel in distress.
Sprinkle a host of cameo roles featuring a derranged professors genetic mutations and you would be mixing the ideal ingredients of a cartoon style adventure game – par excellence.
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FLIMBO'S SERIOUSLY DETERMINED, BUT
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JACK'S BACK

Accolade were so chuffed with the success of *Jack Nicklaus's Golf*, they're releasing *Jack Nicklaus's Unlimited Golf and Course Design* (yikes!). Based on the design system Jack uses to create courses, players can now have unlimited golfing fun by playing some of the greatest courses in the world, while playing on their own designs too!

Accolade have improved the playability and believe the course designer is more complete and detailed than any other architect product. Featuring an instant replay feature, fast drawing of courses, playing tips from Jack and flying divots (!), *Unlimited Golf* is out soon on the PC, Amiga and ST for £29.99. Owners of the original can upgrade to *Unlimited Golf* at a reduced price through Accolade direct (tel: 071 5853308).



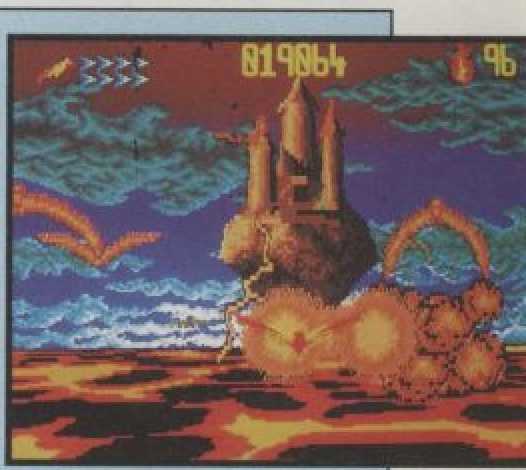
■ **Also from Accolade comes *Hardball II* on the Amiga, offering more fun, more frolics and generally a whole lot more than the original.**

MONTY PYTHON

The dead parrot, the Ministry for Silly Walks, fish slapping, Eric the half-bee, the squashing foot — classic comedy from Messrs Cleese, Gilliam, Jones, Chapman, Palin and Idle, collectively known as Monty Python's Flying Circus!

Just a few months off, Virgin Games' adaptation of the dotty TV show is looking good. The action is based around Terry Gilliam's madcap animation sequences and star of the game is Gumby — the strange little fellow who always appeared in shorts, knotted handkerchief and walking boots. Poor chap's lost his brain and he has to tramp through four surreal levels to find it. Programmed by Core Design the graphics are great, real Gilliam stuff, and the best news is that it's playable *and* funny. Out on Spectrum, C64, Amstrad, ST and Amiga in September.





It would appear that French **Ubisoft** reckon their latest 16-bit game *Unreal* to be a bit of a winner. Indeed, so much of a winner that it could easily wipe the floor with Psygnosis' *Shadow of the Beast* (so, that was the reason for the *Shadow* T-shirt — Ed). Mmm...

We decided to check out this wonder game that's set to shake the world (hem, hem). The action's set in the mystical world of Unreal. Your sister Isolde has been captured by the Master of Darkness and is being held prisoner until she agrees to marry the evil swine. So you, Artaban, and faithful sidekick The Copper Dragon embark on a quest to rescue her.

There are two parts to *Unreal*, both using very different styles of gameplay. The first section offers speedy 3-D blasting, looking not too dissimilar to *Afterburner*. You're controlling The Copper Dragon, flying over Unreal's landscape to reach the edge of the Master of Darkness' domain. The objective is to fly safely, destroying whatever evils attack, and locate the changing sword, a magical weapon.

The action switches completely in part two, which is an arcade adventure scenario, viewed from side on. You battle through the countryside and buildings of Unreal beating off all manner of foes. To smash the four elements of darkness you're armed with the changing sword, which can power-up making the blade burst into flames to defeat even the most persistent creatures. Erm, hold on a mo'. Take a close look at the the screen shots, anything strike you as a bit odd? Yes, the hero appears to be starkers — oh dear.

Unlike the majority of arcade adventures, *Unreal*'s scenery graphics continually change depending on your actions — there's always something happening onscreen. It's not all hack 'n' slash, though, you'll need to use logic and reason to find hints and tips.

You're free to run up and down hills in the scenery, though watch out for slippery rocks and ice. And keep an eye out for enemies; one of their tactics is to hide in the background and jump out unexpected.

Featuring five different pieces of music, and sound effects throughout the game, *Unreal* is released at the end of June on Amiga only at £24.95.

■ **Also on the Ubisoft front, look out for the *Pro Tennis Tour* competition at Virgin Megastore, Marble Arch, London on June 30. You can play *Pro Tennis Tour* against other people during the day in an organised series of games. There's heaps of prizes to be won so get on down there! More details from Virgin Megastore on (071) 4918582.**

UNREAL





Spawning nearly as many games as the World Cup, the Wimbledon tennis tournament is just around the corner. And to remind us how thrilling tennis is, **Grandslam** are releasing a brand-new simulation called *Grand Slam Tennis*. Grandslam reckon the game's a winner because of the split-screen technique used to show both ends of the court. 'This kind of display is vitally important,' say Grandslam. 'When playing a two-player game in previous products there was just one view of the court: the player operating the background sprite was at a serious disadvantage.' This has all changed with the split-screen display. Packed with a range of formidable strokes and all the usual tennis stuff, *Grand Slam Tennis* is out at the end of June on ST, Amiga, Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad.

GRAND SLAM TENNIS



■ Fed up with driving around the same old scenery in *Test Drive II: The Duel*? Be bored no more. Out now for Amiga and Commodore 64 disk drive owners is the latest accessory disk: *European Challenge*. A snip at £11.99 on Amiga and £8.99 on C64 disk.

PGA TOUR GOLF

Does the name Fuzzy Zoeller mean anything to you? No, he's not relation to that great comic Fuzzy Bear, but is a professional golf player from the States. And Fuzzy's just one of the people you can play against in **Electronic Arts**' latest simulation, *PGA Tour Golf*. Up to four players compete, playing on the Sterling Shores, Avenel, Sawgrass and PGA West Stadium courses.

The PC version of *PGA Tour Golf* is released in June with the course fee set at a very reasonable £24.99.

■ For ST, Amiga and PC owners the 16-bit Computer Fair opens its doors on June 28 till July 1. It's happening at the Royal Horticultural Halls, Greycoat Street, Victoria, London **and the show organisers are promising a huge event with such exhibitors as US Gold, Tynesoft, Audiogenic and Gremlin.**

GAMES FOR GOOD CAUSES

There's an exciting event happening in Hull on June 30 and July 1. It's the **Compute For Charity** exhibition packed with surprises and competitions from the likes of **Ocean**, **US Gold** and **Psygnosis**! Money raised will go to the BBC's Children in Need appeal, the Portobello Scout Group mini-bus appeal and Kingston Special Needs Scout Group who require a computer. Compute For Charity admission prices are £1 for adults and 50p for children, with Blue Peter badge holders getting in free! Doors open at 10am both days, so if you're in Hull that weekend the place to be is: **The Portobello Hall, The Broadway, Holderness Road, Hull**.



SILVER BLADES

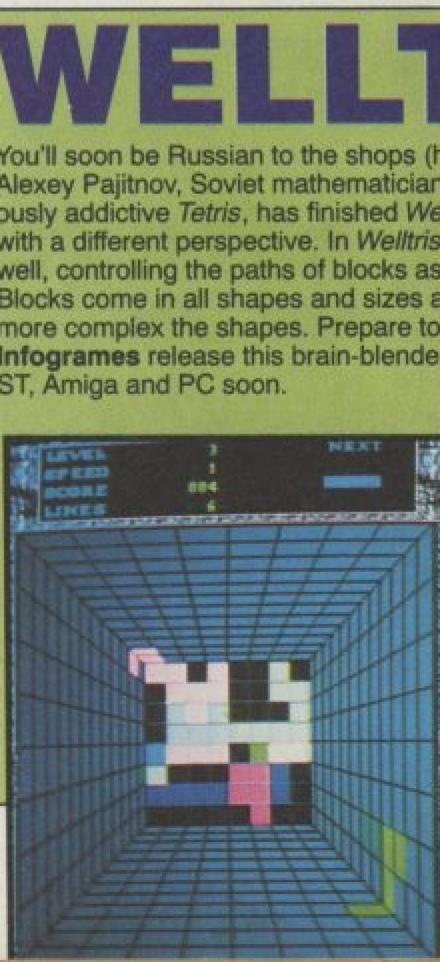
Oh, dear. There's a new RPG coming from **US Gold** on its Advanced Dungeons & Dragons label called *The Secret of Silver Blades*. Oh, dear indeed. Not that the game's bad, far from it, it's just that it means another fantasy story to relate. Better get on with it... *The frigid valleys of the Dragonspine Mountains echo with the desperate plea of terrified miners 'Heroes of the Forgotten Realms, save us from evil.'*

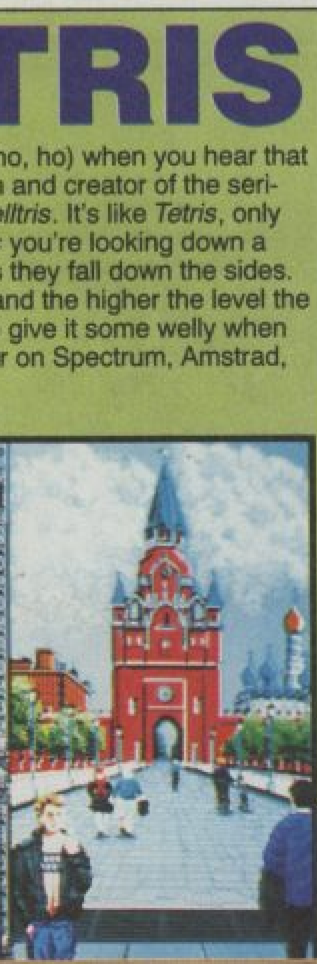
Unwittingly digging in hallowed ground, they have disturbed an ancient vault and released its terrible content. Scores of horrific creatures now infest the mine shaft — and threaten to escape into the world above. So, there you have it. *The Secret of the Silver Blades* improves on the game system used in *Pool Of Radiance* **and** *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, allowing you not only to continue the saga in the Forgotten Realms game world but also implement your existing characters from *Azure Bonds* into the *Silver Blades* game. Rid the land of monsters including Drider, Hydra, Umber Hulk and Purple Worms when *The Secret of the Silver Blades* is released on C64 and PC in early July.

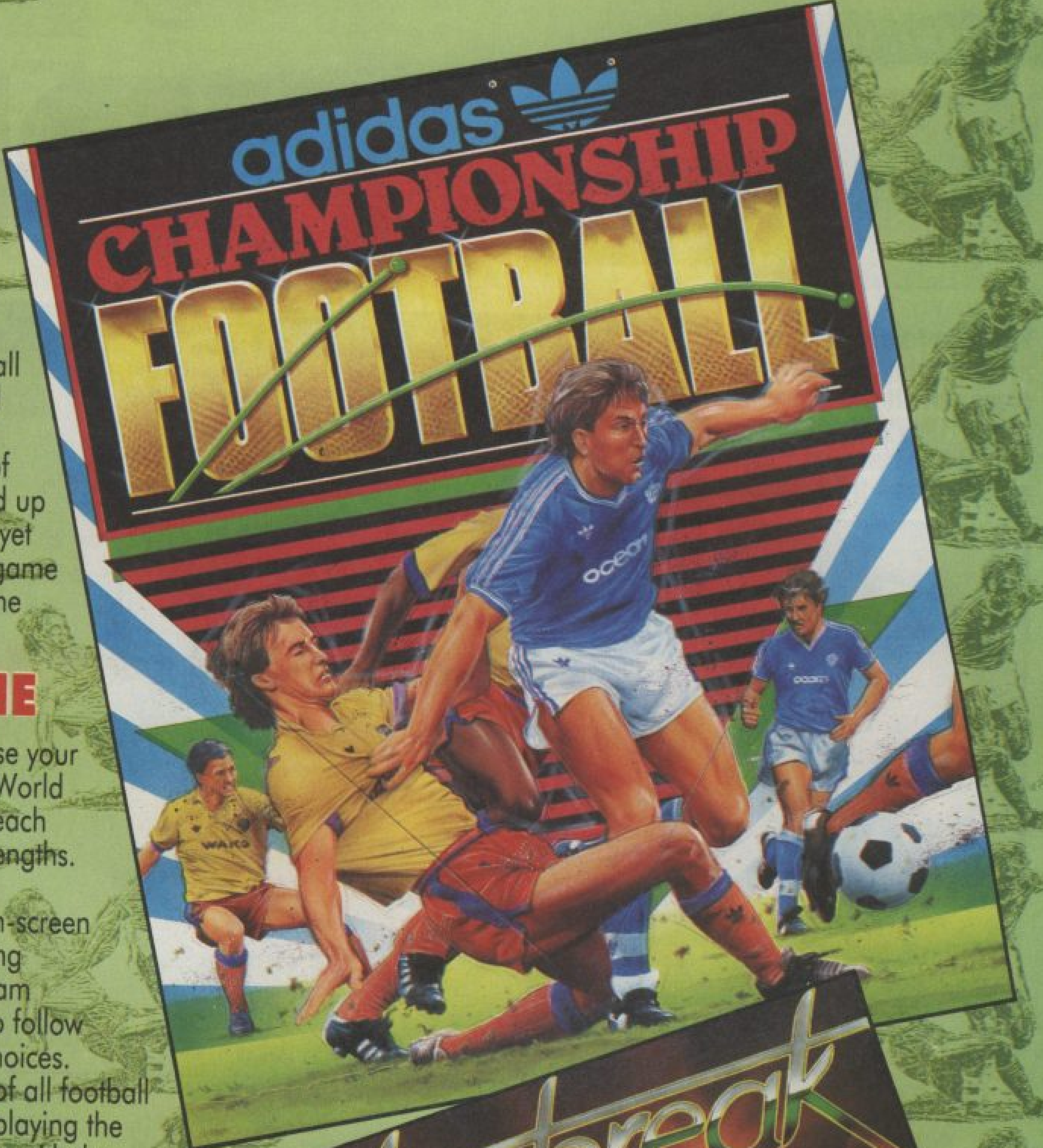


WELLTRIS

You'll soon be Russian to the shops (ho, ho) when you hear that Alexey Pajitnov, Soviet mathematician and creator of the seriously addictive *Tetris*, has finished *Welltris*. It's like *Tetris*, only with a different perspective. In *Welltris* you're looking down a well, controlling the paths of blocks as they fall down the sides. Blocks come in all shapes and sizes and the higher the level the more complex the shapes. Prepare to give it some welly when **Infogrames** release this brain-blender on Spectrum, Amstrad, ST, Amiga and PC soon.



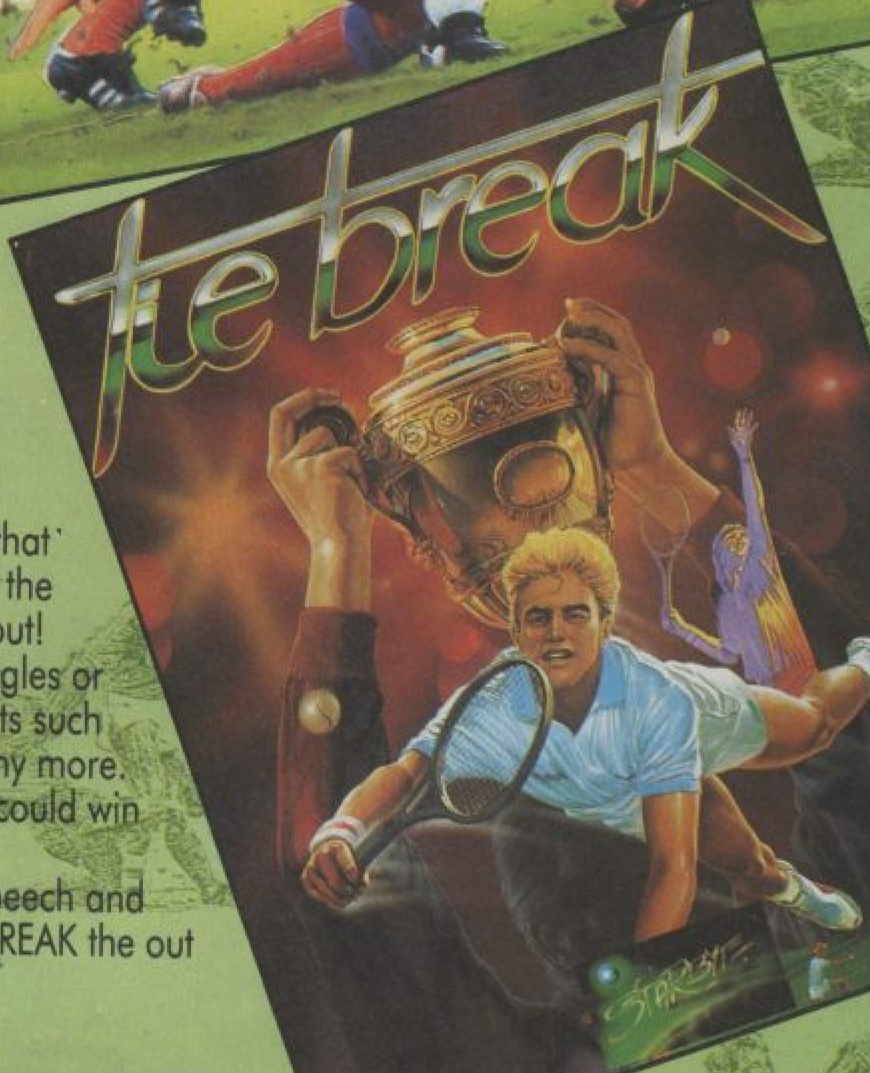




Natural and responsive player movement and with the most simple of one-touch joystick control ensures exciting and authentic soccer action. Realistic close-ball control, computer aided team control and the micro's constant "flow of play" monitoring all add up to make this the easiest yet most rewarding soccer game ever devised for the home computer.

TAKE ON THE WORLD! Choose your opponents from the 24 World Championship teams - each have their own styles,strengths. ..and idiosyncracies!
You will delight at the on-screen action, realistically flowing animation, automatic team response and the easy to follow icon-generated action choices. This game is the choice of all football players, those who love playing the game instead of wrestling with the joystick...
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Pin 'em to the base line, attack the net and volley the winner! You might have taken this match but that was on grass - can you play as well on clay or on the indoor courts?... with TIE-BREAK you'll soon find out! And the play selection doesn't end there - play singles or doubles, select to play in all the major tournaments such as Wimbledon, Davis Cup, French Open and many more. You can then make a racquet selection -and that could win you the match!Featuring all the shots in the book, breathtaking animation and amazingly realistic speech and sound effects in T.V. style presentation make TIE-BREAK the out and out winner on any micro.

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THE TIDE

You'd be forgiven for thinking that top programming house Bullfrog had only produced one game, albeit the award-winning Populous. Suffice to say, they are set to change all that. Very soon they'll be releasing Populous 2 and Flood, an arcade break from the usual strat attack...





Flood started out life as a graphic demo showing how water finds its natural level — over a year ago! There was no gameplot till *Populous* was released. That was when Bullfrog decided they wanted to design an arcade game, a break from the strategy of their intercontinental surprise hit.

Star of the game is a cute (ugh!) fat green blob with a quiff, appropriately named Quiffy. This Richard Eddy lookalike is the last remnant of a whole race of green blobs (not all Eddy lookalikes, you'll be glad to hear) who inhabited an underground kingdom. As is befitting a race of green blobs they've been wiped out by a host of psychotic creatures. Intent on doing the job well they're now after Quiffy.

Playing the part of Quiffy you've got to progress through the subterranean levels to the surface as quickly as possible. Just to remind you of your mortal danger the caverns gradually fill up with water.

Scenario aside, *Flood* is essentially a platform game. As is with blobs of this nature, Quiffy gets sticky. Okay, so he can't jump or fly or anything flash like that, but he can crawl along walls and ceilings. And with 36 levels of pure wet and wild mayhem, Quiffy'll need all the help he can get.

In order to progress from level to level a certain number of gems must be collected. As you can imagine, these aren't always in the most accessible of places.

Each level harbours its own fair share of nasties intent on hindering your progress or killing you. One particular bad guy drops extra gems around the caverns. These have to be collected before you can progress to the next level. If you don't kill him, he'll continue dropping gems and you'll be stuck on that level... forever.

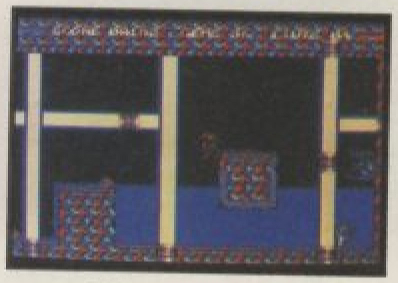
Generally speaking, sticky green blobs aren't that useful in a fight. But even their viscous bodies can hold a weapon; and there's plenty to chose from. Try your luck with flame throwers, grenades, dynamite and boomerangs. Sadly, only one can be carried at a time and each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

'But what about the water?' I hear you cry. Well, as mentioned earlier, the caverns gradually fill up with water. As in *New Zealand Story*, the star of the show can swim around in



■ Armed with a deadly flame thrower Quiffy dispatches another set of marauding baddies. Extra points can be earned by collecting the cans and cassettes.

IS HIGH





the water for a short time. However, stay in the murky depths too long and more than Quiffy's ego will become deflated (his lungs for instance!).

Water flows from a series of taps scattered around the level. You can't turn these off, but find the right sort of object and they can be temporarily plugged (use the wrong one and the water will flood even faster).

Although not on the scale of their immense *Populous*, Bullfrog have included a certain amount of strategy. Due to its nature, the water in itself is a time limit. Also, gems in certain areas are more prone to flooding; obviously these should be first on your shopping list. But the water can also be an aid. Some gems appear to be totally inaccessible, stranded on lone platforms. But after a decent flood, it's possible to swim across the water and capture the jewel.

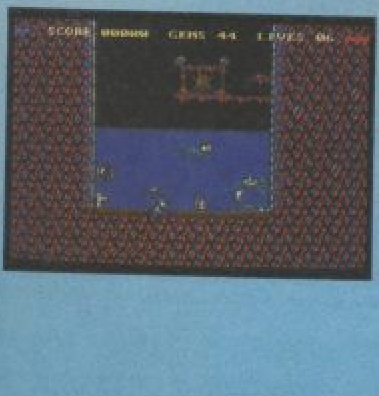
There's also the ghost of your dead aunt wandering around. She recreates your movements exactly, and follows just ten seconds behind you. So hang around too long and she'll catch up and kill you.

Flood is clearly aimed at an audience who don't fancy the major strategy of a game like *Populous*: it's great for all ages.

So much memory and processing time has been used handling the graphics and sound that there's no in-game music. However, there are 64 sampled sound effects. Using volume change and pitch shift techniques the samples are altered to create even more effects.

Flood is without doubt based around its graphics. The characters are superbly drawn and animated. Plus, there are numerous neat touches (such as a high score table with identikit facility — design your own mugshot) which make this a very Bullfrog game.

■ Flood will be released by Electronic Arts in June on the ST and Amiga priced £24.99.



HERE'S A LOAD OF BULL

Bullfrog can't be described as a prolific software development company. This isn't due to any laziness on their part (or so they say) but to the high standards they set themselves for each product. When they embark on a project it is developed until it is just about playable, then the whole team continually plays it to see if they really do like the game. If the general consensus is that it's lacking something, the project is abandoned. *Ranger* and *Colony* were two such games that fell by the wayside, though elements from both eventually found their way into *Flood*.

Bullfrog tend to work on several projects at a time, splitting the work between smaller teams each working on a different game — though the whole company usually has a hand in the project at some point or another. Shaun Cooper and Simon Hunter are the team responsible for *Flood*. Shaun designed and programmed the game while Simon designed the graphics.

Shaun: 'I don't really play that many games. I've played *Sim City* and I like a good flight sim like *F29 Retaliator* but I wouldn't say that I was influenced by any game in particular. Simon's great graphics were a real boost. Once I got those the rest of the ideas just came to me.'

Simon: 'Before working on computer graphics I always wanted to be a cartoonist. I bought my ST and start playing around with graphics on that. I designed the graphics for *Dragon's Breath* then approached Bullfrog and began work on *Flood*. The main character was originally sketched out on computer. I then drew him on paper, and made some alterations, then the design was transeferred back to the computer. Once it was decided that the character was going to walk along the walls I pictured him as a green blob thing, something that would actually stick to the walls.'

With *Flood* now finished Bullfrog aren't about to take a rest.

Peter Molyneaux (head programmer): 'There's an as yet unnamed game which should be released sometime around September. That's a strategy game based around warring tribes. We've also just finished the design stage of *Populous 2*, but there's no release date set for that yet. In the future we want to develop more arcade-orientated games.'

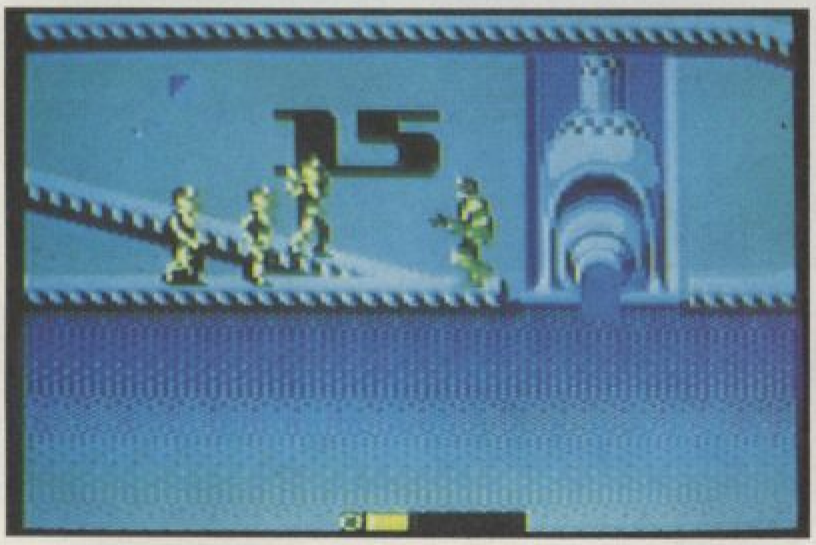


DAY OF JU

He is the Law. And let's face it, no-one's going to quibble about that. Judge Dredd, the future's most feared law enforcer, is back on your computer screen in September. Richard Eddy visited Mega City One and caught a few perps in the process...

Seeing the success in the future of law enforcement with Ocean's *RoboCop* (18 months in the chart, and still hanging on in there), Virgin Games wanted a futuristic crime fighter who would not only uphold the law but uphold a decent chart game featuring some of the worst perps (perpetrators) in Mega City One and Dredd's evil equals: the Dark Judges.

There's a consistent kind of gameplay throughout the six levels — a multi-directional scrolling platform, shoot-'em-up.



position too. There is only one man who makes RoboCop look like a lollipop lady, and he's Judge Dredd, star of 2000 AD.

Dredd has been on computer before — Melbourne House gave him a go a few years back but didn't really capture the character. So, Virgin Games have taken five Judge Dredd stories from 2000 AD and turned them into one six-level Viewed from side on, the action takes Dredd through crime-infested tower blocks. Each level has its own end-of-level battle, a bit different in each level. There are two counters to keep an eye on throughout the game: Dredd's energy counter and the crime rate level. Should Dredd's energy level reach zero he's packed off to hospital and if the crime rate rises beyond acceptable levels Dredd resigns.

The game actually begins at Dredd's information computer. Here you receive Mega City One's crime reports, your objectives for the day, the low-down on villains and even Dredd's mail. Having rounded up enough information for Dredd's first task, exit the computer and head into the streets on foot.

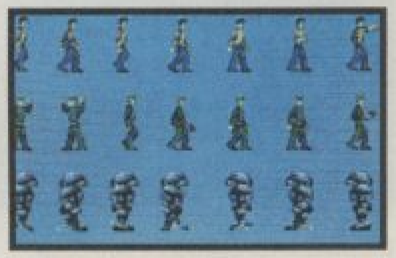
Trouble begins at Wm Bunter Block. The place is overrun by the League of Fatties, threatening to eat their way through the city. Dredd's objective is to shut down four food dispensers on the block and starve the Fatties out. However, the Fatties are a defensive lot, and being as round as they are high can cause a helluva lot of damage.

Their main tactic is to throw themselves off a high platform, directly above Dredd. Tough as he is, a kamikaze Fattie attack drains Dredd's energy fast, as does an attack by a charging Fattie. The humour of the Judge Dredd stories has been kept in the game — watch out for the Fatties who use pizza slices as missiles!

Armed with his gun, the Lawgiver, Dredd can make quick work of a Fattie and often a dead Fattie leaves a power-up pod behind, enabling Dredd to use homing missiles or a laser blast. The Fatties are tricky, often hiding behind normal civilians. If Dredd accidentally wipes out a civ it pushes the crime rate up.

As I've said, these Fatties are tricky, and realising Dredd has destroyed the food dispensers, head off to the food convoy going out over the Cursed Earth. This makes up the end of level one battle. Dredd leaps on top of one of the three convoy trucks beating off the Fatties.

Back at HQ, Dredd discovers more trouble. Over at Charles Darwin Block, the evil Professor Fribb has invented an enzyme which is reversing the process of evolution. The enzyme is leaking into the air through air vents, slowly all the resident civs are going down the evolutionary scale turning into



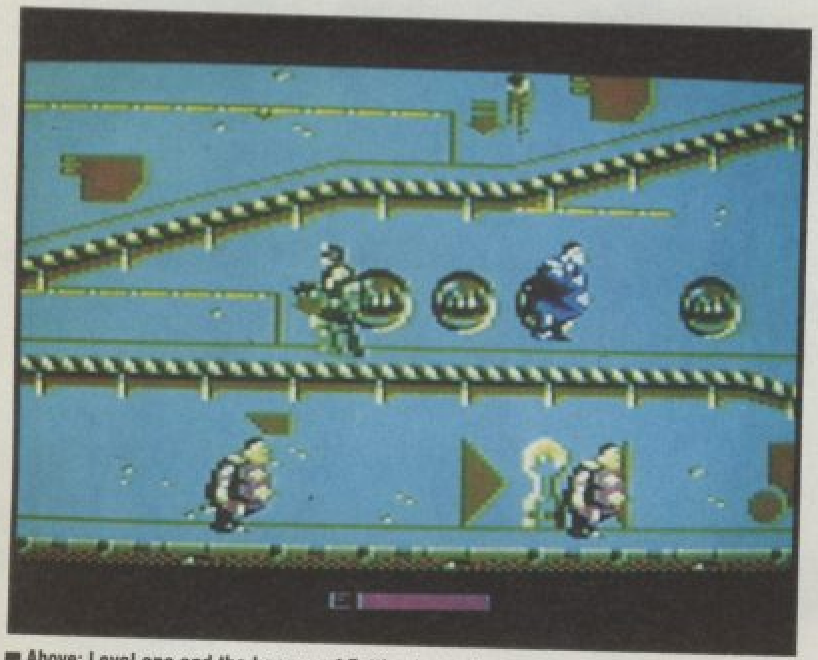
apes, lizards and some going even further down and transforming into amoebas!

This has to be stopped. Head off into the block to locate the four enzyme-leaking air vents and shut 'em down, while avoiding the apes, lizards and amoebas which all pose a threat to Dredd. To get around the block quicker, as on all levels, Dredd can leap aboard his bike, the Lawmaster, and hurtle along the platforms and ramps. The Lawmaster is for travel only: to arrest or blow an enemy away Dredd has to dismount.

The ultimate aim is to shut down the enzyme-producing



UDGEMENT



■ Above: Level one and the League of Fatties begin their onslaught on Mega City One. Can Judge Dredd destroy the food dispensers before the plump ones turn him pancake? Below: Professor Fribb's dangerous enzyme is on the loose throwing normal civs down the evolutionary scale — here they're going ape!



machine completely. That's in Fribb's room, but can't be entered until all the vents are closed. Inside, amoebas have taken over and blasting results in splitting the amoebas — just keep firing until the amoebas are so small they vanish.

Levels three and four are based on one story: Blockmania. Sov agent Orloc is attempting to induce Blockmania, a Mega City madness, in everyone by poisoning the water supply. Level three is set at the Aqua Station and Dredd's objective is to turn off the contaminated water supply at the four valves. With other Sov agents, hovering droids (the Satallats), bombs and Orloc himself against Dredd this is no easy level.

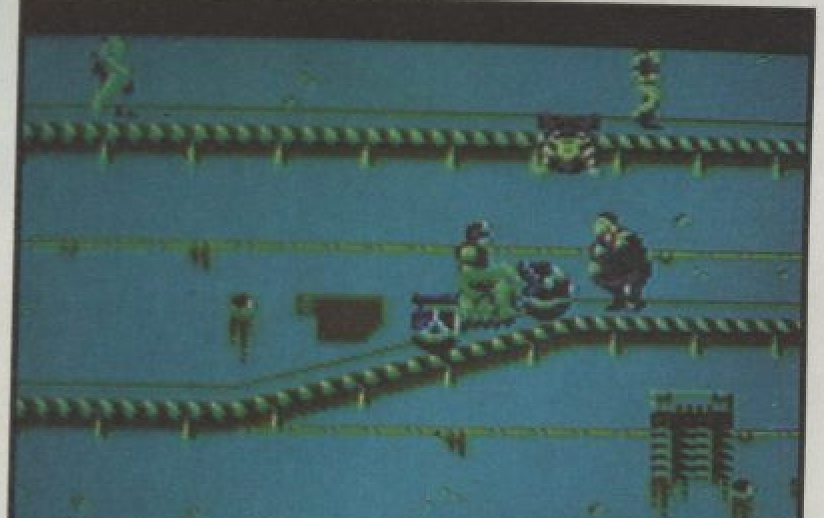
With the four valves switched off Orloc makes his escape in a truck. Dredd gives chase on the Lawmaster, leaping over barrels thrown from the truck. However, Orloc has already planned a full escape which takes him to the Weather Station, a floating platform high above Mega City One, where he plans to poison the rain as it showers over the city.

So, in level four, Dredd faces another attack by Orloc and his comrades while trying to turn off the four sprinkler systems and so stop the poisoned downpour. Like level three, the end-of-level battle revolves around Orloc's escape plan. It's a scrolling shoot-'em-up as Orloc leaves in a shuttle, showering Dredd, on hover-bike, with bullets and debris. A well-placed strike by Dredd causes Orloc and craft to hurtle towards the ground and destruction. Yayy!

Another 2000 AD story for level five: Block War. Two large blocks of flats are engaged in a vicious war. Dredd has to destroy all gun emplacements and visit the control room of one block to stop the war. Again you've got this huge scrolling map of the blocks, but, with a war raging, there are armed killers everywhere. The end-of-level sequence has Dredd blasting through a series of walls which move up and down. Get through the walls, shut down the battle computer and that's the perps dealt with.

On the final level Dredd must battle against evil equals: the Dark Judges who come from another dimension where being alive is a crime. Judge Fire, Judge Fear, Judge Mortis and Judge Death have come to terrorise Mega City One and have their own particular way of dealing with Dredd; Death's speciality is to reach out and squeeze Dredd's heart.

So, how do you deal with Dark Judges? With Dimension bombs, that's how. There are around 20 bombs scattered throughout the play area and Dredd has to collect as many as possible whilst fending off the Dark Judges' attacks. When enough bombs have been collected, Dredd enters the final conflict area where he faces each Dark Judge in turn. Each attack using their dark skills, only Judge Dredd has the power (and enough Dimension bombs) to scatter them back to their own dimension. The battle's just begun...



DREDDFUL PEOPLE

Judge Dredd game began life last summer when Virgin bought the licence from Fleetway. The product manager, Andy Green, along with his team designed rough storyboards. They wanted a game that obviously played 'ell but also got the character of Dredd and the 2000 AD comic across convincingly. 'It was so difficult to capture the atmosphere, especially the humour, of 2000 AD in a game,' says Andy. That's why between levels and sequences such as Dredd resigning, the story is told in frames, just like 2000 AD. Graphic stills and text build up the story as the game progresses. The *Judge Dredd* game is being produced by The Sales Curve using its in-house programming team, Random Access — also responsible for *Silkworm* and *Shinobi* amongst others. The Judge Dredd artwork on the cover is by Dermot Power who, since painting Judge Dredd for Virgin, now illustrates for 2000 AD.

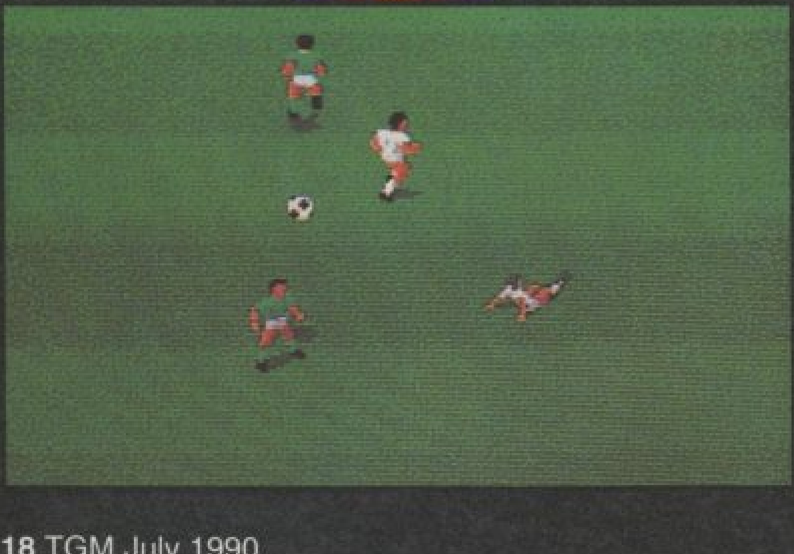
CRAZY COIN-OP GIVEAWAY!

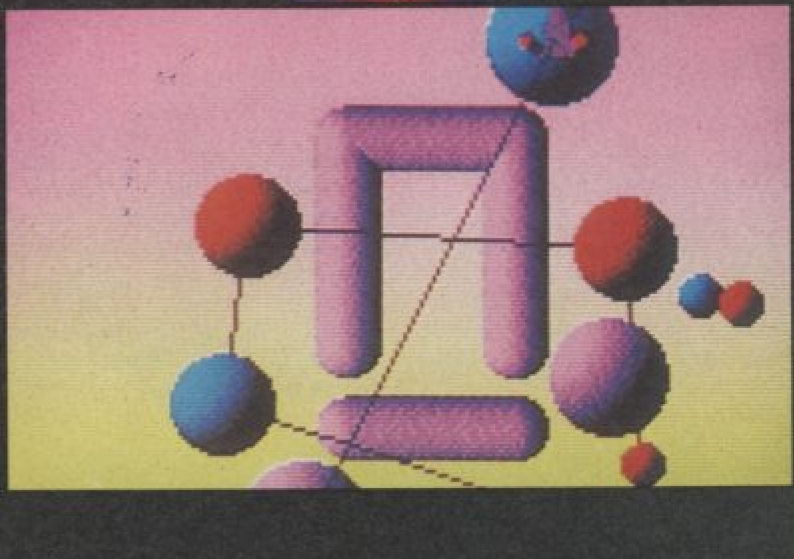
PICK FROM ROLLING THUNDER AND HALLS OF KAIROS!

Can it be true?! Is TGM really giving away a full arcade machine? YES! Read on...

E-MOTION
Bouncing balls and puzzles a-plenty!

CRACKDOWN
Mammoth two-player game in which you must place many time bombs.





The card stuck to the cover of this issue is your passport to winning one of two fabulous arcade machines! The two whizzo coin-ops on offer are *Rolling Thunder* and *Halls of Kairos* donated by top coin-op conversionists US Gold.

Before we get down to the nitty-gritty, let's have a look at the coin-ops up for grabs...

Rolling Thunder is a brilliant, scrolling, cop 'n' robbers game. You've infiltrated the evil Geldra's HQ in pursuit of an evil drug baron. Now his henchmen are after you so prepare to run, leap, climb and shoot your way through the ten levels of Geldra's complex. It's fun, fast and brilliant to play — and soon this Namco coin-op could be yours!

Sega's *Halls of Kairos* is probably better known as *Desolator*, the name that US Gold gave its conversion. *Halls of Kairos* is like *Gauntlet*, with a lot more elements to it. More fun than you could ever imagine (legally).

HOW DO I WIN?!

Nothing could be simpler! (Well, not having to do anything at all would be a bit simpler, but that's a bit boring.) Printed along the bottom of the page are four screenshots of recent US Gold games. Above each one is a title and brief description of a US Gold game. But which title goes with which screenshot?

Match the picture to the game, fill in the cover card and send it off to the usual address.

RULES AND CONDITIONS

Entries must be received by July 19 ■ All entries must be on the cover compo card, which must have the US Gold compo logo stuck on it ■ See masthead for full details ■ No correspondence will be entered into.



COMPETITION

ITALY 1990

Could the team you pick to play make it through to win the ultimate footballing accolade: the World Cup?

DYNASTY WARS

A coin-op conversion based in second century China.





A VERY BIG JOYST

It's all very well for manufacturers to claim that their latest console plays every bit as good as the coin-op, but they rarely do. Most of us have to make do with second best, actually owning an arcade machine is just an expensive dream. However, the latest craze sweeping Japan involves machines that allow you to plug in arcade printed circuit boards (PCBs) and play your favourite coin-ops at home. Robin Candy takes a look at a prototype of the Universal Energizer from Unitec Systems and wonders if all his dreams have come true

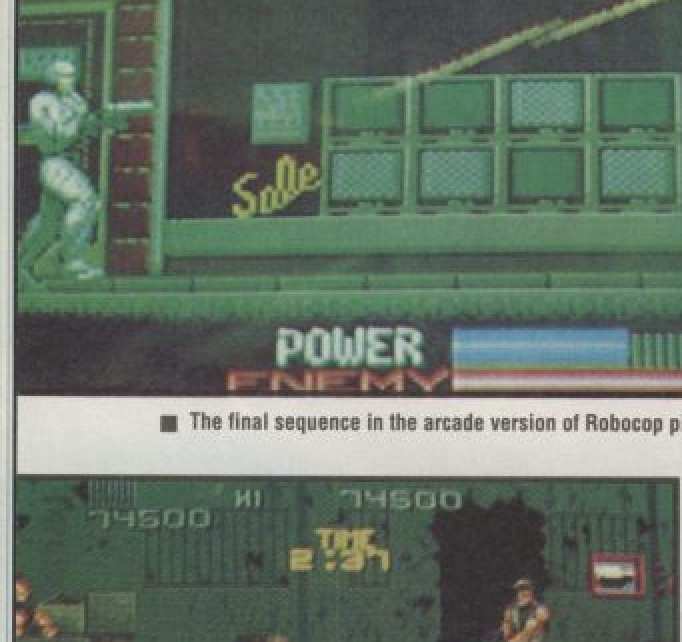


■ A great game in the arcade. Now thanks to the Universal Energizer it can be a great game at home.

At the heart of every arcade machine is a printed circuit board. Fixed to this are all the microchips and electrical wizardry that make the game possible. The actual cabinet that the game comes in usually isn't very sophisticated (unless it's a special one with a hydraulic chair). In fact, most cabinets are pretty standard and include an interface



■ The final sequence in the arcade version of Robocop pits you against the formidable ED-209.



which allows you to swap between different PCBs. The most commonly used interface is known as JAMMA and it's this that allows the Universal Energizer to be connected to a vast store of arcade PCBs.

The prototype of the Universal Energizer looks like a giant double joystick controller — and that's basically what it is. The JAMMA interface on the back of the controller connects it to the PCBs with additional ports to output the sound and picture to your TV/monitor and hey presto you're playing arcade original games in the comfort of your own home.

The Universal Energizer will be available for somewhere between £130-145, normally arcade cabinets fitted with a JAMMA interface cost over £300. The price includes several plug-in interfaces which allow the controller to be used with a variety of consoles including the PC Engine, Nintendo, Sega and most home computers fitted with Atari standard joystick ports. Subsequently, you need never, theoretically, use any other joystick again.

You may have noticed the varying sizes of monitors in arcade cabinets. In general, vertically scrolling shoot-'em-ups seem to have longer and thinner screens than horizontally scrolling games. Coin-op manufacturers don't usually have monitors specially designed according to the game type (screens are mainly 14- or 20-inch) they just flip the monitor on its side to make it appear longer. You'll also have to do this when playing games of this type (I hope no-one's only got a 26-inch TV — Ed).

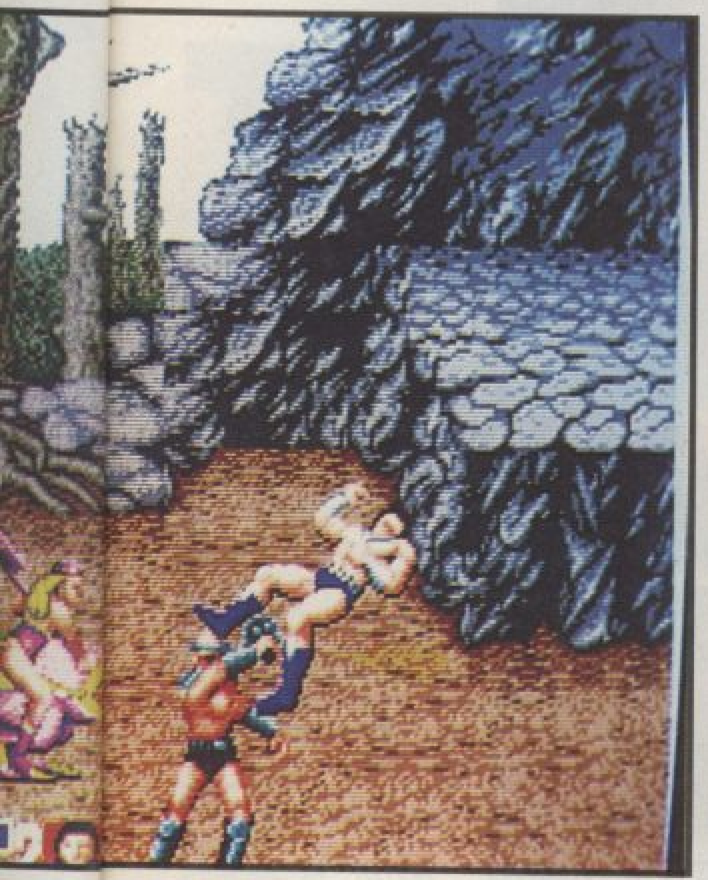
Prices of PCBs vary enormously. As you would expect the latest and most popular games are the most expensive, usually £1000+. However, if you're content with games that were all the rage three years ago you can pick up some real bargains. Just to give you an idea of prices here's a

WHO ARE UNITEC?

The Universal Energizer is Unitec's first product, however, the brains behind the big joystick is no stranger to the niche markets of the computer industry. Unitec is run by James Dexter, the man behind Mention Technology: one of the first mail order companies to import the PC Engine into Britain.

STICK INDEED!

CONATCTS
Coin Slot: 2 Daltry Street, Oldham, Lancashire. Tel: (061) 624 3687.
Unitec Systems, tel: (0436) 72615, **fax:** (0436) 78577.



selection of PCBs advertised in a recent issue of coin-op industry paper Coin Slot: *R-Type II* £395, *Aliens* £745, *Ghost 'n' Goblins* £70, *Dynamite Dux* £275, *Golden Axe* £345, *RoboCop* £245, *Shinobi* £220, *Crude Buster* £545, *New Zealand Story* £175, *Xevious* £70, *Bombjack* £50. Not bad, eh?

Not all games are JAMMA compatible. Coin-op distributors Electrocoin fit all their machines with an alternative PCB interface (though Unitec promise an Electrocoin adapter will be available soon), while games such as *Hard Drivin'* require special cabinets. If you do get into the world of collecting arcade PCBs always check with the manufacturer/distributor that the PCB is compatible with your equipment.

Next month TGM will be looking at two new devices which boast arcade quality games. If you can't wait that long take a peek at this month's Our Man In Japan for a preview of one of the machines, SNK's Neo Geo looks set to become one of the most sought after consoles. It's already a firm favourite in the TGM offices.

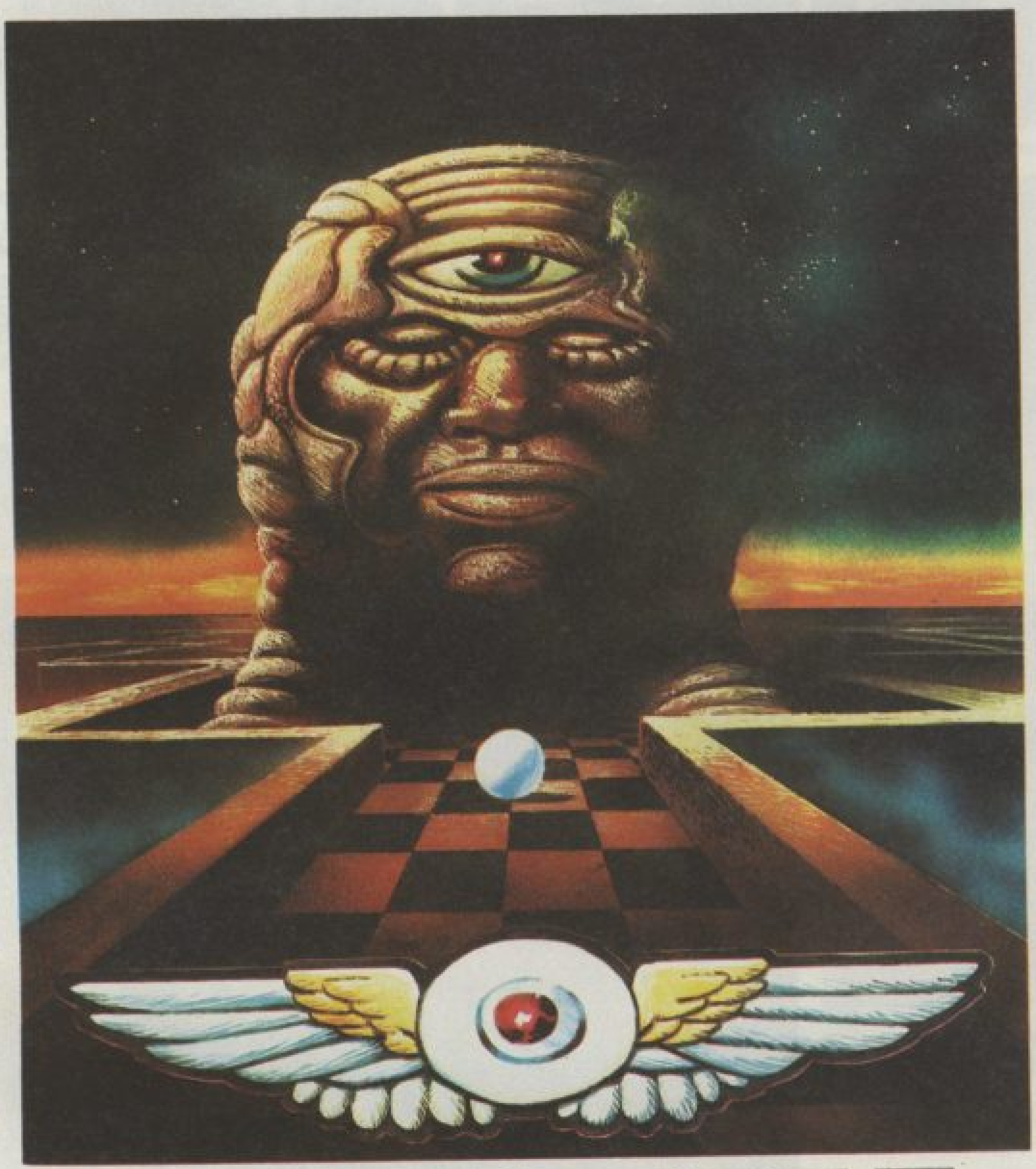


■ The PC Engine and Amiga versions of this classic game are good but there's nothing like playing the original. An R-type PCBs costs as little as £150.



■ Looking somewhat like a giant joystick the Universal Energizer comes complete with additional interfaces which allow it to be used with, amongst others, the Nintendo console.

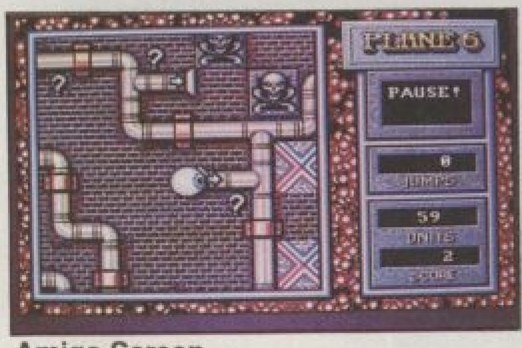
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THALAMUS

HANGING ON THE TELLYPHONE

From the fax machine to the cash dispenser, from the kissogram to Sky TV, these days each one of us takes instant communication for granted. Why shouldn't we! The telephone has been with us for over a century. But, as Mel Croucher explains, it is about to undergo a few changes. The 'wonderful' world of videophones is upon us



So, what's The Next Big Thing in home-based telecommunications for the likes of us? We already know of the home terminals some high street banks are giving away. Indeed, in France, the Minitel system is piped through to 10,000 terminals, supplying not only money information but also weather and traffic reports. But after that, after facsimiles, telexes and CB radio (?), what does the comms world have in store for us? Well, if those ruthless marketing people have anything to do with it, we will soon be enjoying the dubious benefits of being able to see who we're talking to on the latest gadget: the videophone. And, like the telephone, it will change our lives.

EVOLUTION

The first artificially-produced verbal message concerned an ancient Roman capitalist called King Midas, and like all the best phone calls it was a bit of juicy gossip. When all had ceased to turn to gold and the great god Apollo landed Midas with a pair of ass's ears, nobody knew about his personal affliction except for the King's hairdresser. But the poor barber couldn't resist spilling the beans to a hole in the ground and burying the secret. It wasn't very long before reeds grew on the spot, and when they rustled in the wind, they transmitted their whispered message to the world. (They still do if you listen hard enough.)

Nothing much happened in the evolution of the videophone for a few thousand years after that. The talking drums were fine for a long distance, audio transmission but somewhat lacking in the visual department, whereas internet bonfires suffered from the reverse handicap. There are unproven theories that Leonardo da Vinci built an amazing solar-powered videophone system in 1519, complete with last number redial and a little device that played bloody awful music while you were left fuming on hold (sounds like we bought the system for TGM — Ed). He designed it to make direct contact with the Universal Prayer Exchange Database run by the Lord God, but unfortunately the only time he used it, old Leonardo got an infinite recorded message and died before the Lord could get back to him. On the other hand, I could have just made that up.

What is certain is that in 1839, William Fothergill-Cooke and Professor Charles Wheatstone were granted a patent by King William the Fourth for an electric telegraph. It was absolutely state of the art, using five wires for coded transmission at one end, with receivers consisting of needles that pointed to letters and visual symbols on a revolving dial. Forget the railways, steamships and penny post, long distance telecommunication had arrived, and the world began to shrink. In 1876, the year that the first transatlantic telegraph cable was laid, Alexander Graham Bell built the first 'electric speech machine' from an adapted deaf aid. No doubt he had planned to utter some momentous words for the occasion, but he got so excited that he knocked half a pint of battery acid over his leg, and the first ever telephone message was him shouting to his assistant for help: 'Watson, come here, I need you!'.

One hundred years later, prototype machines began to send facsimile visual images along standard telephone lines, and the boffins latched on to the theory that simple audio frequencies could be used to encode and decode pictures. On 1 October 1987, the first video image was sent between two commercially available phones via the public lines of the Nippon Telephone and Telegraph company, Japan. I don't doubt that by 2 October 1987, the first visually indecent phone call had been received (yeah, and you probably sent it, Croucher — Ed).

And that's part of the problem. Imagine a young fellow taking a bath, playing languidly with his rubber duck, when his newly installed videophone rings imperiously next to the soap dish. The caller is some hapless telephone salesgirl trying to flog double glazing, and our man gets so flummoxed that he drops his video-send unit and spontaneously transmits a blurred image of a limp lighthouse. Doesn't bare thinking

about, does it. Or would the picture quality be too naff to cause any offence, hilarity or yawns? Let us examine the quality of video image that is currently on offer, and how the quality is likely to be improved.

REVOLUTION

In the lands of gross consumerism — Japan and America — videophones have already become yet another 'essential' hardware purchase, like the automatic dishwasher, the thinking microwave and the pet-me wet-me robot pooch. Most videophones have a normal-looking handset, but the big difference is that the dialling unit features a miniaturised mono TV screen with a little video camera above it. Adaptor units



are already on sale so you can display videophone images on jumbo size TV screens, or record them on your domestic VCR.

Because most national and international phone lines can only transmit up to 19.6K of data per second, it takes about 30 seconds to end a conventional A4-sized fax. When it comes to video images, the crawling speed is about the same for the initial picture to build up and for each subsequent refresh screen. In other words, current videophones are nothing more than gimmick boxes, and receiving the pictures they send is more painful than waiting for a photo booth Polaroid to develop. If you forget about speech, cut down on all the video detail, scrap any notions of colour or grey scale and stick to stark black and white, you can transmit one image every five seconds.

Obviously, the customer insists on the ability to keep talking while an image is building up on the video screen. There are two alternative ways of allowing this: the first is to limit the bandwidth of audio frequencies used for vocal data. Telephones do this anyway, resulting in the traditional 'tinny' reception via old-fashioned equipment, and video pulses can be sent via the audio-pulse frequencies that are left over. The second method relies on sensing the 'blank spaces' left by all the little pauses that occur in natural conversation, and filling these gaps with the signals needed for the continual updating of pictures.

You can buy a gismo like the Mitsubishi Visitel through mail order for about £250. It's compatible with all UK modular wall jack systems, features a 4.5-inch monitor, displaying 32 shades of grey over a 96x96 pixel grid, has a 16mm lens and the best benchtest for image refreshing clocks in at about six seconds. £20 will buy you a wide-angle and close-up lens kit, and the same amount buys a cable and box for transmitting pictures to monitors. Of course, you can't receive pictures from someone who hasn't got a videophone themselves, so checking up on how well-looking granny is (and vice versa) will cost you another £250 for her unit.

As an increasing number of people choose to work from home, the videophone will proliferate. Not only will diagrams, models and instant reactions be sent and received along with normal conversations, but pseudo face-to-face conferencing can take place too (thus avoiding expensive intercontinental travel). The world will again become a much smaller place.

So when will full-colour realtime moving pictures be available via domestic videophones? Would you believe now? Neither would I, but the prototypes are already up and running with best guesstimates of 1992 for service in Japan, USA, Singapore and Australia, 1993 for Germany and France, and 1995 for other territories with digital phone exchanges. These dates rely on the implementation of the latest buzzword telecoms system, known as ISDN.

CAN I USE YOUR DICTAPHONE?

The magic initials could easily stand for I Smell Dosh Now, but to telecommunications engineers it means Integrated Services Digital Network, and it's designed to send combined signals all around the planet for voice, fax, still video and computer data. So far, the best refresh rates for colour video frames are running at about six update images per second, so the telephoned moving picture has reached the stage of pseudo-realtime. As you would expect, ISDN is an all-digital system that can bounce data off satellites and push it through fibre-optic cables without any loss of signal quality, and it's only when it reaches your domestic or office equipment that the signals get converted to analogue form. Existing models operate via twin channels carrying 64K of information per second, and they are getting better all the time.

The main obstacle to getting a global system up and running is exactly the same as in the computer business: compatibility. But agreements will surely

THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE

Try the following predictions on for size: this is how the videophone will change our lives within ten years. Don't take my word for it, companies like Sony are investing billions to ensure that it happens!

Market forces and commercial competition will force the cost of hardware down. 'Tellyphones' or whatever they end up being called will be capable of transmitting via wire or radio, and automatically link in to satellite communications downlinked to local cable networks. Prices will fall from over £250 to under £50. The cost of the actual calls will be charged at a premium rate to begin with, but these will soon be scrapped. As in the USA and several EC states, local calls will become free, in order to encourage the phone habit. The bottom will drop out of the fax machine market. The planet will shrink to its smallest possible scale.

Work

Freelance workers, small enterprises and home education will benefit as much as big business. Estate agents, travel agents, designers, doctors, lawyers, bankers, probation officers, teachers and pimps will all be able to work remotely. Teleconferencing will become the norm, unnecessary travel will be taxed to the hilt. All legal contracts, long distance deals and day-to-day transactions will be automatically logged, allowing interest rates, taxes, discounts and appeals to be periodically and instantly adjudicated. Work will not only become easier, but also more efficient.

come, because they will be vital for the post-industrial age where information is power, and the transmission of that information is needed instantly.

What's really annoying is the Government's decision seven years ago to scrap the plans for wiring up the whole of Britain with fibre optics for local cable-TV networks. If that had gone ahead, we would have ISDN right now and be world leaders in this new (and very lucrative) digicoms business.

Just imagine what the home of the future will be like. TVs will include video recorders, integral cameras, CD-ROM databases, computers, hi-fi players, and two-way vocal input/output for control and telecommunication. (Amstrad will be market leaders. Alan Sugar will be Prime Minister — Ed.) Adultery will become less spontaneous. The deaf will be able to lip read phone calls. Interactive multi-player video RPGs will boom and then collapse. Tele-messages will be timeshifted and sent or received via video recorders. Mary Whitehouse will start a campaign to outlaw 0898 tele-video services. Hackers will attempt to peer into people's private lives, literally. The military and security forces will try to achieve the same. As for me... I'll be seeing you!

'Smith!' screamed the shrewish voice from the telescreen, '6079 Smith W.! Yes, you! You can do better than that, you're not trying!'

A sudden hot sweat had broken out all over Winston's body. Never show resentment! A single flicker of the eyes could give you away. 'We can see you,' said the voice. 'Stand out in the middle of the room. Do not touch one another.'

(George Orwell, '1984')




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The Games machine

REVIEWS



IRRESISTIBLE!....44

Ocean strike back with a slamming action-packed coin-op conversion! And the good news is that *Midnight Resistance* is even better on computer than in the arcades! You're gonna flip!

PLUS: TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES/28 ■ THUNDER STRIKE/46 ■ INTERNATIONAL 3D TENNIS/34 ■ AND THE REST OF THE BEST

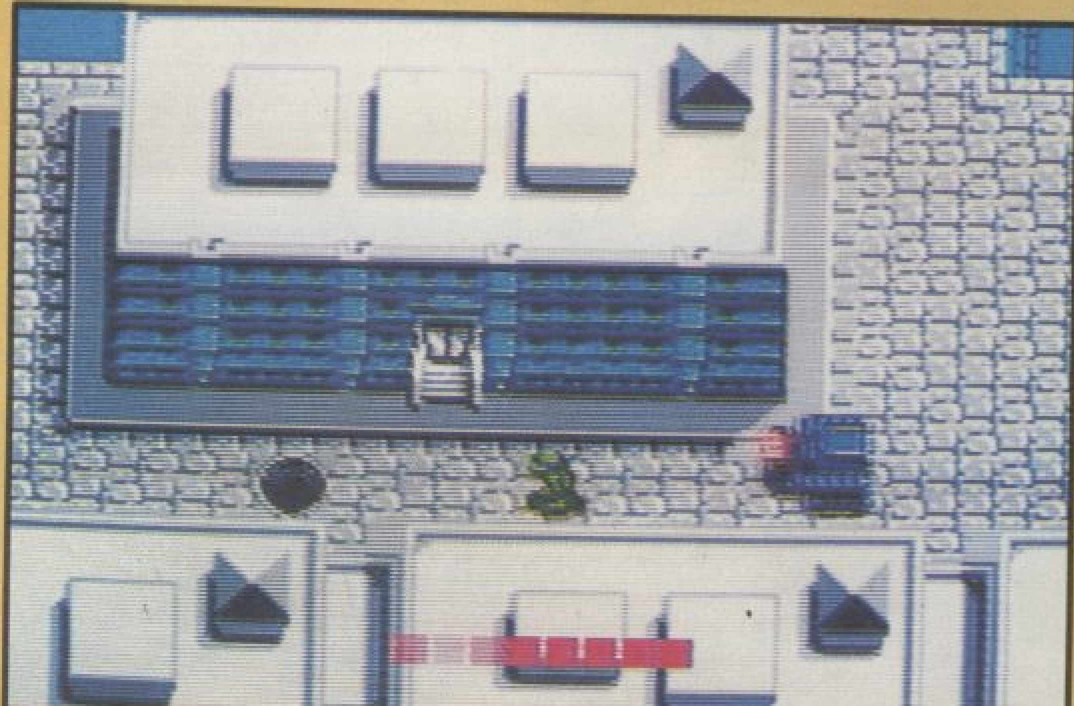
GAMES INDEX

Cowabunga, I love being a turtle!

TEENAGE MUTANT

What are green, amphibious, and currently raking in loads of cash at the American box office? Why the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, of course. And, from the left, that's Raphiel, Donatello, Leonardo and Michaelangelo (sound like good names for painters), the mutated turtles who were rescued from a New York sewer by Splinter, a rat. (For some strange reason they're called the Teenage Mutant *Hero* Turtles in the UK.) Due to the radioactive nature of the gunge they were found in, both the turtles and the rat grew to human size and gained the power of speech — weird. Splinter then proceeded to teach them all he knew about the art of ninjitsu (seems like a clever rat).

Each turtle favours a different weapon. Raphiel carries a strange 'trowel on a chain' device, Donatello favours a Bo stick, Leonardo carries a Katana sword, and Michaelangelo sports a Nunchuku. Only one person can play either of the four turtles, swapping turtles when energy gets low.



TALES OF TERRA-PINS

Peter Laird and Kevin Eastman are men behind the turtles. Both had wanted to create their own comic for years, but it wasn't until they were both working in a fast-food store that one of them doodled a turtle with a sword onto a serviette. They used a tax rebate to create the first comic featuring the 'heroes in a half shell', and the rest, as they say, is history. A lucrative plastic toy deal with Hong Kong-based Playmates Toys led to a cartoon series and a movie that opened in the States in March.

After the film rights were turned down by companies like MGM and Twentieth Century Fox, an independent company called Golden Harvest picked up on the idea and ploughed #15 million into the project. They also brought in the late Jim Henson (creator of The Muppets, Sesame Street, Labyrinth, The Dark Crystal and The Storyteller series) to design the characters for the feature.

The film has already grossed over $100 million and looks set to make more than even Batman. Expect to see the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles on the big screen this Christmas.



HERO TURTLES

KONAMI



GAME **TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES**	
PRODUCER **KONAMI**	
VERSIONS	
NES	£34.95

NES **86%**

The game kicks off to a great start with an oriental tune and some impressive portraits of the turtles. Though, sadly, some of the in-game graphics are a bit iffy and there is the odd screen glitch. Initial playability is high, all the turtle sprites are well drawn and animated and the bad guys present quite a challenge. *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* is a very playable slash-'em-up, I just hope that whoever's producing the home computer version hurries up.



Energy can be replenished by, as all fans will know, eating some pizza.

All heroes have their arch enemies. The turtles' main enemy is The Shredder. He and his evil band of ninja thugs, the Foot Clan, constantly plague our fun-loving heroes as they try to complete their various missions — the first is to rescuing their girlie pal April.

You start by viewing your chosen terrapin walking through the grimy streets of New York. Dropping through one of the numerous man-holes takes you into the underground sewer system, and although it's crawling with The Shredder's henchmen it must be travelled to get anywhere in the game. But use those weapons, for, as the old reptilion saying goes, Shredder's by name, shredders by nature.

Icons occasionally appear, these include extra weapons, pizza and invunerability. If the doors to buildings are open, enter them to collect a few more bruises — and icons. At the end of each level (mission) a nice animated sequence informs the turtles of their next assignment. And you can bet your bottom dollar that The Shredder has more than a hand in all of the foul deeds.

I've been a great fan of the comic for years and am pleased to see the Nintendo game arrive.



Comic book licences are big business these days and *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* is a very good example of what can be achieved when a strong licence is backed by a tough, but very playable, game.

Mark Caswell



Make mine a sweet and sour

ORIENTAL GAMES



MICROSTYLE

GAME **ORIENTAL GAMES**
PRODUCER **MICROSTYLE**
VERSIONS

AMIGA	£29.95
ATARI ST	£29.95

ATARI ST **79%**

Pleasant sports centre and reception screens lead into the options, and from there to the very easy to use joystick editor. Game graphics aren't going to set the world on fire but do their job. Backgrounds are a bit short of detail but are animated with cute features like usherettes patrolling the aisles and the crowd doing 'the wave'. Sprites vary, the kung fu fighters neat 'n' simple in their sleeveless suits and matching slippers, kyo kushin kai'ers suitably hard-looking with excellently shaded muscles, and the folds in the 'skirts' of the kendo fighters are excellently drawn and move realistically. The haggard, Dr Legg lookalike ref is best, waving hankies as hits are made, clearly a frustrated morris dancer.

So you think you're a real hard man? For at least three hours a day, you wear skimpy shorts and vest and pump iron at the gym, using those bizarre exercise machines. Then half-a-dozen circuits around the indoor track and a few dozen blows thrown at that most worthy of opponents, the punchbag. By that time you'll be sweating like a pig and smell twice as bad but at least you'll be *fit*.

That's all well and good but where's the fun in it? The action, the competition, the DANGER? There isn't any. Your slowly ticking mind realising this, you've decided to try something tougher to maintain your macho image: the martial arts.

Up to 16 people can sign on at a sports centre's reception desk, computer players making up the necessary numbers when that many humans aren't available. After choosing one of three skill levels, the arts available can be practised against an expert before specialising in particular moves with the joystick editor. Here moves can be chosen and viewed before being entered into a sequence of four moves, attributed to any joystick position. When that position is chosen in competition, the four chosen moves are made, directly after one another. This cuts down on joystick thrashing and allows deadly sequences to put together, customised to exploit the weaknesses of opponents and protect from their strengths.

Then its the tournament itself, again chosen from the three disciplines of kendo, kung fu and kyo kushin kai, which isn't strictly a martial art, just an extremely violent sport! There aren't rules — there's no referee — just beat the hell out of your opponent!

Each competitor, whether human or computer controlled, begins in the first round, and they start each bout with five green segments of energy. As blows are taken, the first segment turns white, yellow then red. When all segments are red, he's knocked out and his opponent has won.

Each bout is followed by a report screen showing who has been eliminated, who has got through, the number of hits made against each fighter and the number of blocked and missed attempts at hitting them. Up to five merit awards are then given to the winner before the current state of play across the whole tournament is shown. The winning player of the tournament and the two runners up are awarded gold, silver and bronze medals as appropriate, given at an awards ceremony.

The market's so packed with one-on-one martial arts games that there's no great need or demand for another one, it's all been seen, done and played before. But having promised the arrival of *Oriental Games* a long time ago, MicroStyle have stuck to their guns and brought one out.



Being able to move freely between three different disciplines is an essential feature for today's gamesplayer but strangely the *8-bit* versions have *four* events (the extra one's Sumo wrestling). Best art is certainly kyo kushin kai — a bout of fast, no-holds-barred GBH is immense fun, although puts quite a strain on the joystick.

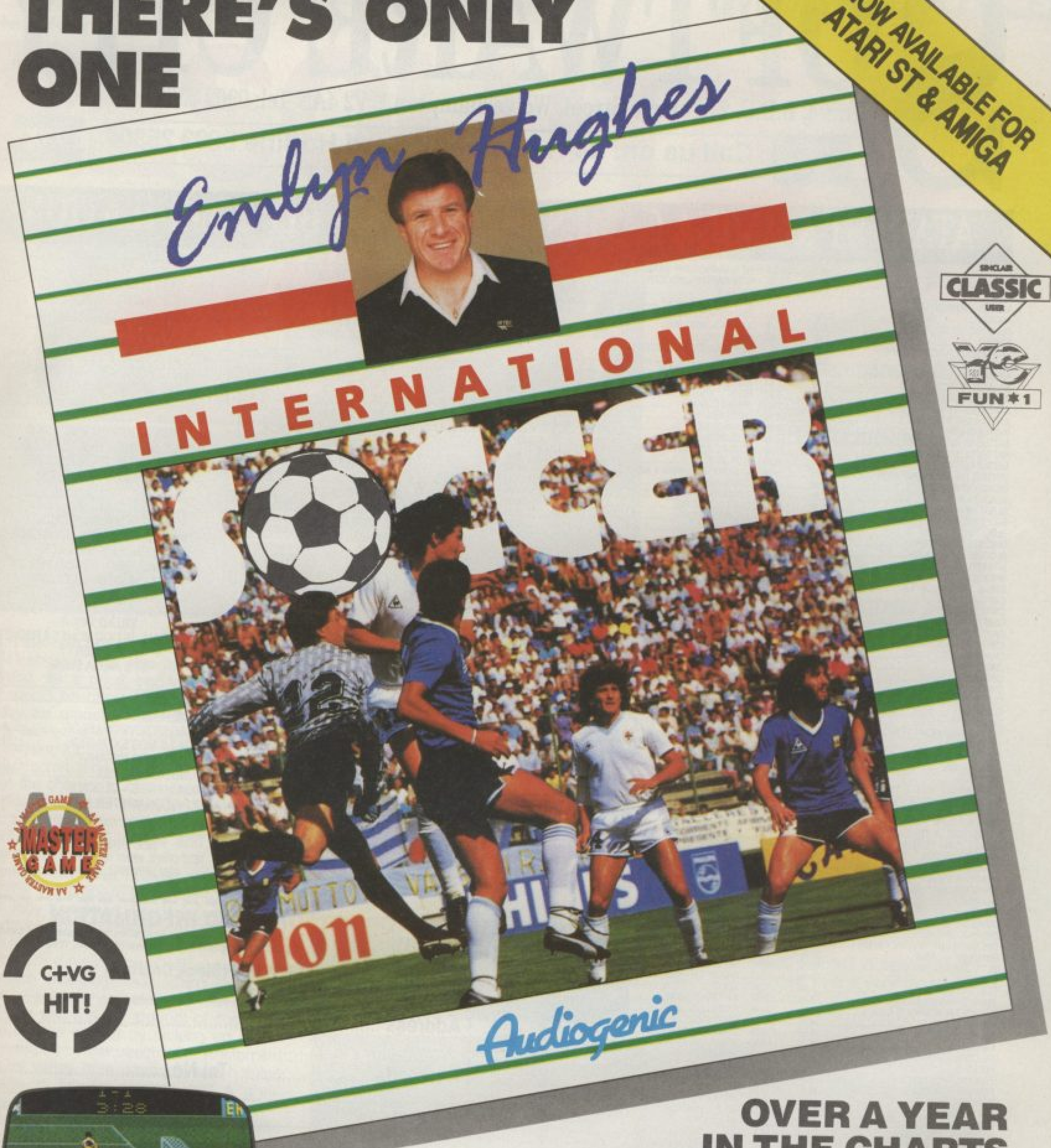
...Which is where *Oriental Games* innovative feature comes in handy. Joystick edit is one of the most unusual and user-friendly abilities I've seen in any game, and *the* most in a beat-'em-up. It's fun constructing move sequences and even better using — just select your chosen 'stick position and sit back while your sprite acts out the four programmed moves.

Although you'll have difficulty gathering that many people in one room to utilise, the 16-player option has the scope for immense competitiveness. A more than competent beat-'em-up with the great joystick edit feature, *Oriental Games* has a niche in your software collection.

Warren Lapworth

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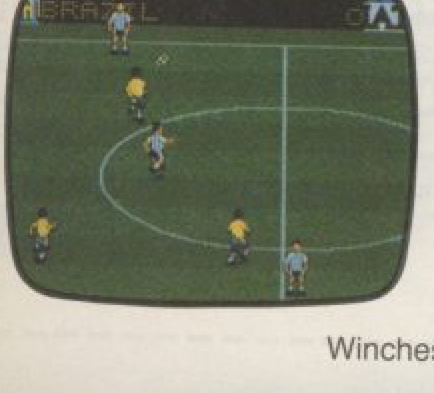
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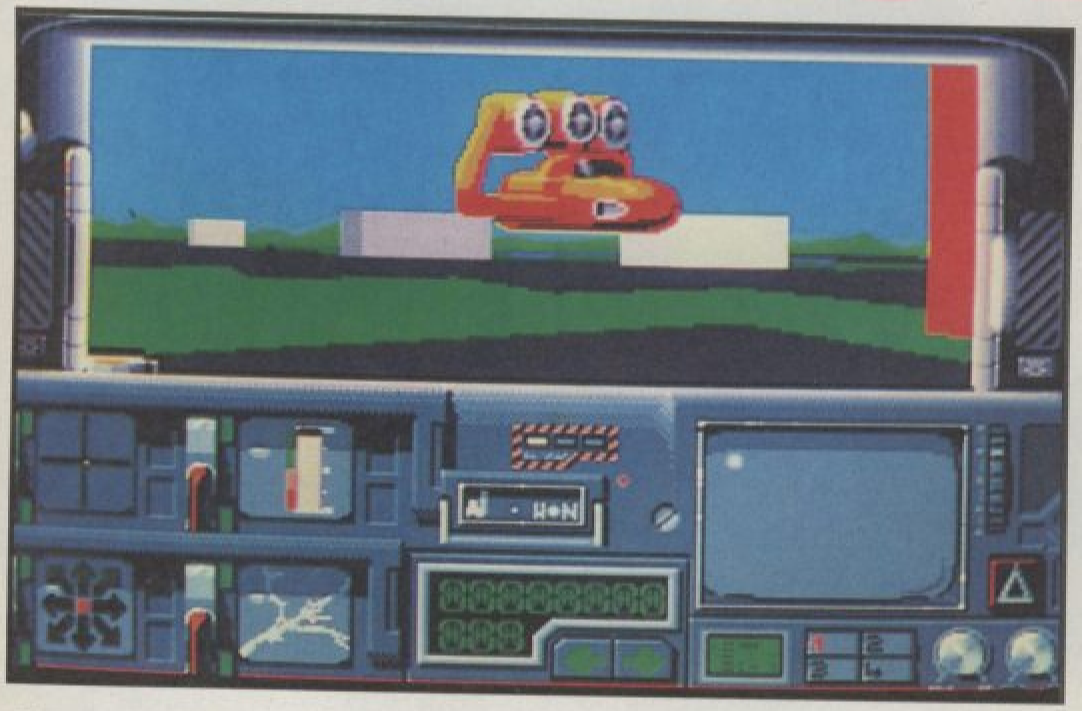
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New Year resolutions

RESOLUTION 101

MILLENNIUM

GAME **RESOLUTION 101**	
PRODUCER **MILLENNIUM**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99
IBM PC	£29.99



On the 19th of January in the year 2038 Resolution 101 was passed. It stated that, for a price, non-violent criminals should be offered amnesty. The price to pay for amnesty was simple: find the *really* bad guys (drug dealers, gang bosses, etc) and kill them.

After committing a 'small' crime you are given the chance to clear your record with the offer of a 'termination run'. Your mission is to track down four drug running criminals operating in Los Envegas and stop them for good.

Jumping in your Theta 4000 ground skimmer you prepare to pursue the first villain, Toby Komazuki. Big K (sounds familiar) drives a huge orange craft, so you can't miss him.

On your travels through Envegas you'll approach shopping malls. Don't just pass them by, pull over and stock up with ammo. You start with a small amount of dosh, but more can be earned by picking up canisters dropped by the henchmen. Equipment for sale varies from cannons and homing missiles to armour patches and a great range of super booster engines.

Sadly, there are a few laws that even assassins must obey. To justify the guys' killing it's best to gain evidence (you know what sticklers for proof these American attorneys are). Evidence, like money, is found in canisters. Red and yellow ones are the most desirable. Ten red 'drug' canisters will allow you to chase the bad guys. Four yellow will give an extra life. Avoid grey and black canisters which are booby trapped.

Of course, Mr Komazuki isn't the only drug dealer, there's his three mates to deal with too. And just when you thought you could book a vacation they all return in faster, better equipped craft.

There are 12 levels of action standing between you and freedom, and although the cityscapes are on the sparse side the game certainly moves like greased lightning.

The game was programmed by Logotron, the folks that produced Archipelagos, and the challenge is very similar and just as tough. Much patience and perseverance is needed, but the satisfaction of saving Los Envegas is reward enough.

Mark Caswell



AMIGA 78%

Millenium née Logotron have been fairly quiet lately with only Cloud Kingdoms and Kid Gloves memorably of late. Graphically, Amiga Resolution 101 is very impressive, the speed of movement is claimed to be 50 frames a second. Sound effects are rare and functional. Although too similar to Archipelagos for my liking, and thus lacking in depth, technically *Res 101* performs well.

ATARI ST 78%

Identical visually (even in speed), but an aural surprise with a very pleasant tune. Still no depth to the gameplay, though.



Oh I say!

INTERNATIONAL 3

It used to be the case that software houses only chucked out in the height of summer to cash on all the excitement of the world-famous Wimbledon grass court tournament. But nowadays you don't even need to see Boris Becker's thighs, drink barley water, hear Dan Mascal's stately tones or have the slightest taste of strawberries and cream before they launch a volley of tennis conversions your way.

At least Sensible Software appreciate the calm, laid back atmosphere of hot, sunny afternoons. In their tennis game, arriving via Palace, you can take things easy in Beginner mode. Here the computer automatically gets you in position to return each shot and makes your sprite flash when the ball is in range.

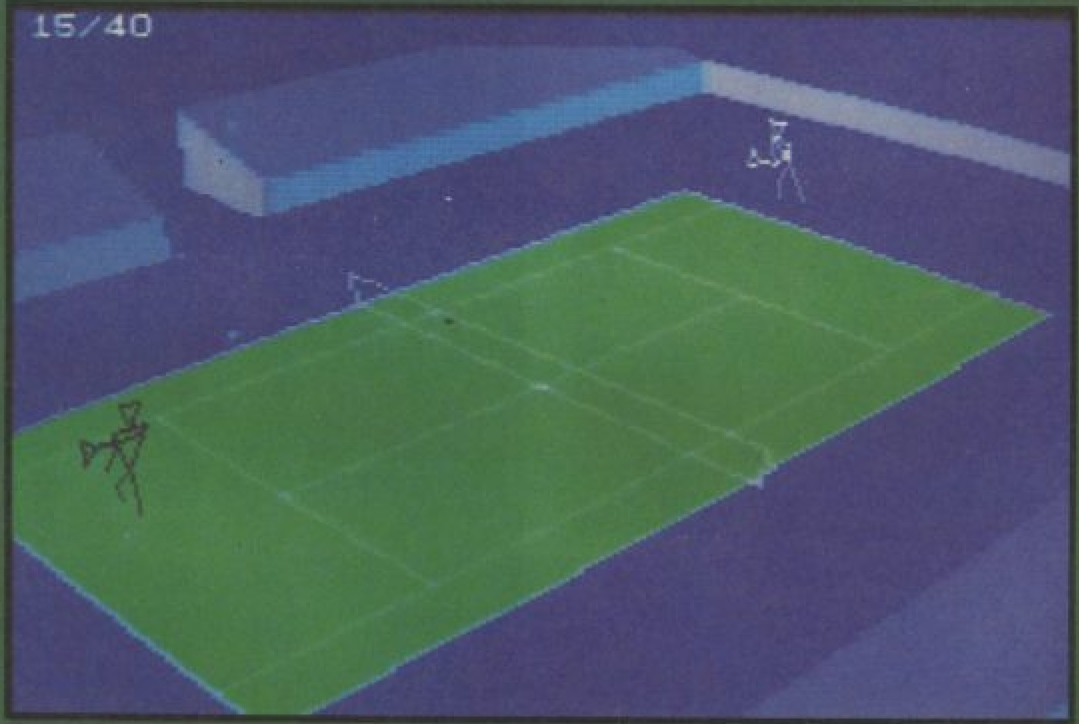
Control isn't just down to the swing: you can move backwards and forwards to affect the angle and timing of the hit. The direction the joystick is held determines what sort of shot is made.

At Semi-Pro level, serves can be directed and at Pro your sprite doesn't flash when the ball's in range. And if you're ever skilled/confident/foolish enough, Ace allows you to put spin on the ball. All these skills can then be used and practised on a computer opponent of one of 15 difficulty levels or in a 'friendly' match against a companion. Either way, a court is selected from grass, clay, cement or carpet(!) court, the type of court affecting bounce height and direction.

From all across the globe, 79 tournaments are there to be entered. Before committing yourself, the location, number of rounds and number of sets for the high-



TGM STAR PLAYER



IN NO SENSE SENSIBLE

Other than odds and sods of freelance work, Sensible Software began their illustrious career with a bizarre (if not to say silly) game typical of their wacky nature, *Galax-i-birds*, subtitled *The game they couldn't stop*. A *Galaxians* variant released on the Firebird budget label, it featured budgies, *International Karate* players and tennis balls from Gremlin's *Bounder* among its unusual sprite cast.

Galax-i-birds was followed by the rather more complicated and professionally produced *Parallax* for Ocean, but it was still essentially a shoot-'em-up, with parallax scrolling (what a surprise). They stuck with Ocean for their magnum opus, the awesome *Wizball*, perhaps the greatest C64 game of all time. The player's ball sprite, which resembled a giant dried pea, contained a wizard who, with the aid of his cat, had to collect paint droplets to restore colour to grey landscapes. A surreal shoot-and-collect-'em-up(!), its fantastic playability was spoiled in the translation to other formats.

Their next production wasn't even a game; Sensible Software switched to Palace software for their *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit*, soon affectionately known as *SEUCK*. Although creations could only be static screen or vertically scrolling, it was extremely user-friendly, allowing all graphics, sonics and attack waves to be completely customised (although player limitations were, well, limited).

A quick budget blast, *Oh No!* (where LED-like cows had to be defended), before the famed *MicroProse Soccer*, the jolly overhead footie which worked very well on 8-bits but was a disappointment on 16 — a bit like *Kick Off* in reverse, really. Big breasts in a *Defender* mould (huh?) for *Insects In Space*, the star game in Hewson's C64 *Fourth Dimension* compilation, and here we are, up to date and back to the sporting world.

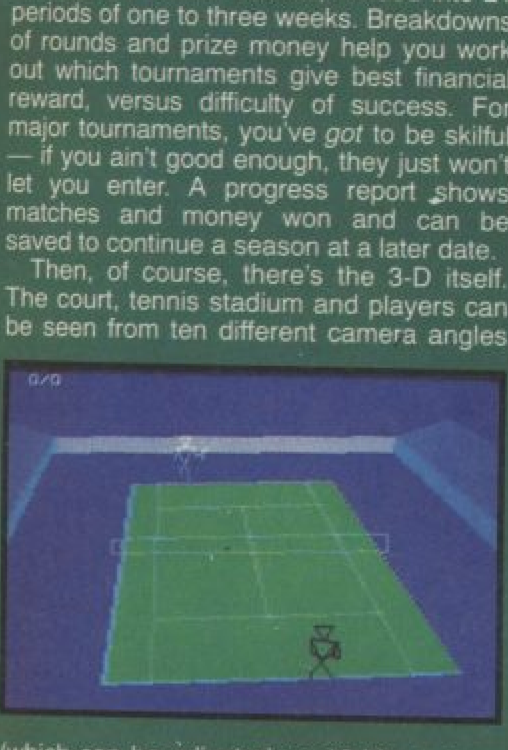
L 3-D TENNIS

PALACE

lighted tournament. If you lack the endurance to play through the correct number of sets (wimp!), you can select single-set matches. Your opponents, a total of 100 real and fictitious players, have various strengths and weaknesses to overcome.

Money is earnt depending on how far you get in tournaments and greedy sods can opt for Tennis Season, divided into 21 periods of one to three weeks. Breakdowns of rounds and prize money help you work out which tournaments give best financial reward, versus difficulty of success. For major tournaments, you've *got* to be skilful — if you ain't good enough, they just won't let you enter. A progress report shows matches and money won and can be saved to continue a season at a later date.

Then, of course, there's the 3-D itself. The court, tennis stadium and players can be seen from ten different camera angles



(which can be adjusted on 16-bit versions to give an almost infinite number of views). As well as the conventional TV angle of behind and slightly above the player, there's a side view, close-up, distant plan view (as if from an airship) and more.

While it's undoubtedly the unusual vector graphics that attract your attention, fancy visuals are no substitute for playability. No problem: *International 3-D Tennis* has bags of it. The computer automatically moving you into position to return takes all the toil out of tennis — that pointless dashing up and down and side to side. It doesn't take control out of your hands, either (especially on Pro and Ace levels), timing, spin and type of shot being more than enough to concentrate on; even with the helpful flashing it's possible to miss the ball completely.

It takes plenty of time to master the game and then there's always a computer player to test your mettle, whether it's of a skill level selected by you in practice or one of the many unpredictable tournament players. There's great satisfaction in a two-player game, too (a so-called 'friendly' match — ha!), particularly after pulling off a dynamic volley deep into their side of the court while they're still stranded at the net.

Combining the innovative 3-D with the variety of shots at hand and the sheer playability, *International 3-D Tennis* is one of the best computer sports games *ever*, appealing to many more than just tennis players.

Warren Lapworth

GAME **INTERNATIONAL 3-D TENNIS**	
PRODUCER **PALACE**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99
C64	£9.99/£12.99
SPECTRUM	£9.99
CPC	£9.99/£14.99

C64 92%

In direct terms of definition, *3-D Tennis* is far from impressive, particularly in screenshots. Stadiums-/courts are displayed clearly and quite plainly in filled 3-D, but it's the vector graphic sprites that are the stars of the show. With triangular torsos and heads, and similarly formed racquets, they're reminscent of the animals in Denton Design's weird *Eco* game, but animation is far superior. They walk with a confident gait, and sway from side to side as they wait for their opponent to serve — which he does in a greatly realistic manner. My only complaint is that the ball often wiggles in mid-flight (strange!) but with realistic sound effects and jazzy music to round it all off, it doesn't matter one little bit.

AMIGA 87%

The game intro is great fun, the jolly BBC Wimbledon music sampled to perfectly set the scene. Scores are called out by an ump but as separately sampled numbers (15, 30, love etc) are put together to form them, there are some strange changes in volume and emphasis. The players are displayed in filled rather than wireframe 3-D, pink limbs and black or white torsos to differentiate them. There are more colours on the stadium surrounding each court than on the C64 but again it's a question of clarity rather than detail. The spoiling factor in Amiga *3-D Tennis* is the ball's flightpath. It seems to have a mind of its own, wobbling and curving quite unbelievably. This is offputting but doesn't cripple the gameplay.

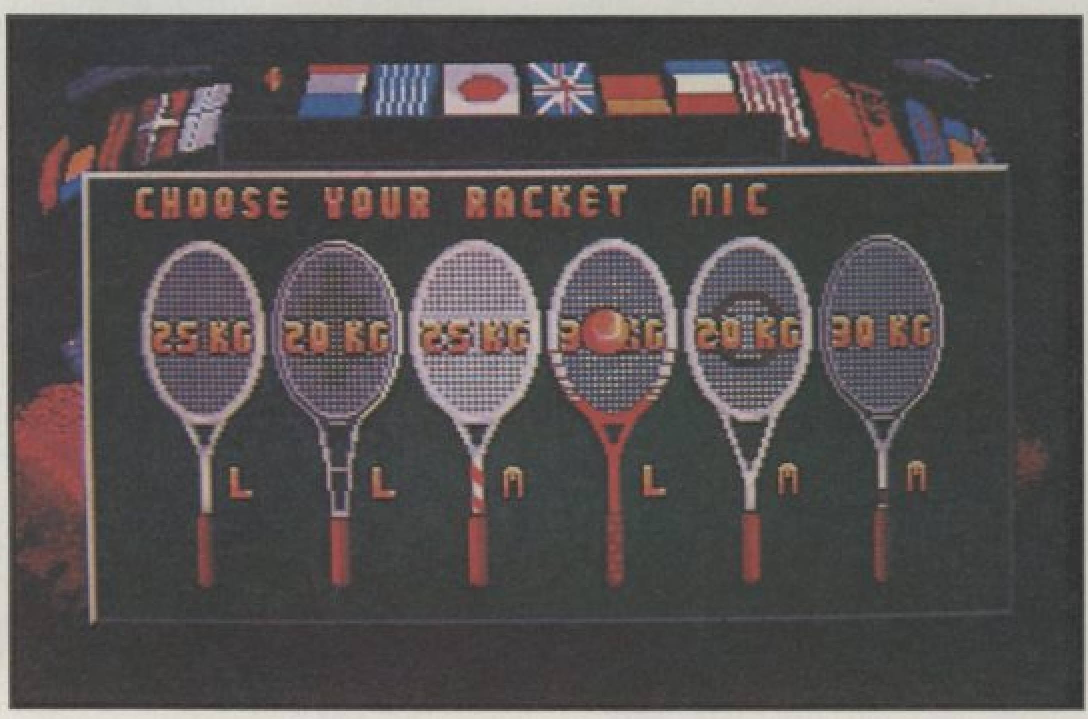
A deuced tricky state of play

TIE BREAK

STARBYTE/OCEAN

Well here we go again! The World Cup's prompted the release of many football games but the sport not too far behind it for computer simulations is tennis. *Tie Break*'s matches are viewed directly from above, but only part of the court can be seen at a time so it scrolls to follow the path of the ball.

Although it's far from a favourite point of view (see box), bird's eye tennis has been seen before, in *Passing Shot*. It's an improvement on it, though, with tournaments and multi-player options as well as greater ball control (*Passing Shot* was largely 'hit and hope').



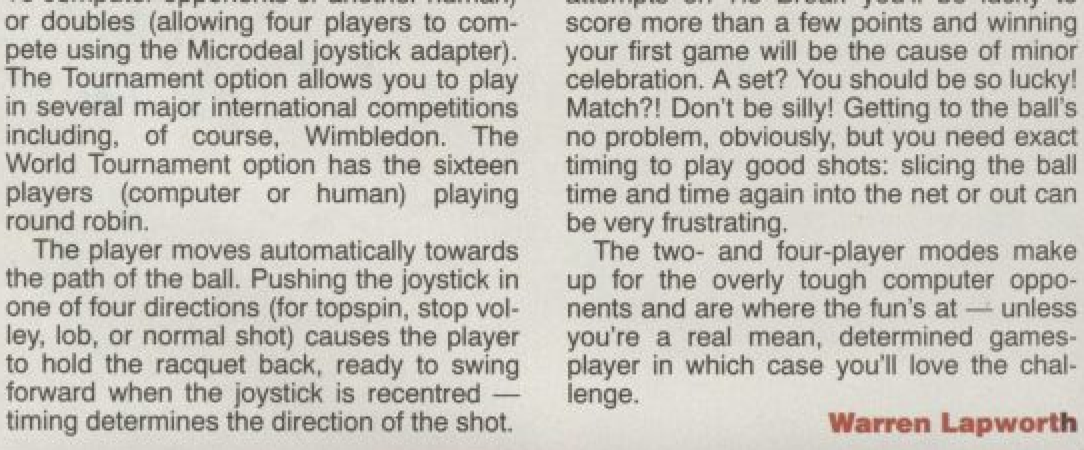
Matches can be singles (against one of 16 computer opponents or another human) or doubles (allowing four players to compete using the Microdeal joystick adapter). The Tournament option allows you to play in several major international competitions including, of course, Wimbledon. The World Tournament option has the sixteen players (computer or human) playing round robin.

The player moves automatically towards the path of the ball. Pushing the joystick in one of four directions (for topspin, stop volley, lob, or normal shot) causes the player to hold the racquet back, ready to swing forward when the joystick is recentred — timing determines the direction of the shot.

It sure is tough, though! In your first few attempts on *Tie Break* you'll be lucky to score more than a few points and winning your first game will be the cause of minor celebration. A set? You should be so lucky! Match?! Don't be silly! Getting to the ball's no problem, obviously, but you need exact timing to play good shots: slicing the ball time and time again into the net or out can be very frustrating.

The two- and four-player modes make up for the overly tough computer opponents and are where the fun's at — unless you're a real mean, determined gamesplayer in which case you'll love the challenge.

Warren Lapworth



GAME TIE BREAK	
PRODUCER STARBYTE/OCEAN	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£19.99

AMIGA 76%

The court scrolls well but is dull to look at. Sprites are reasonable if a bit small and best graphics are the humourous cartoon-like portraits of computer players. Title music's mediocre but there're good crowd and racquet effects and an umpire calls out the scores.

VIEW FROM THE STANDS

By far the most popular and commonly used viewpoint is that from above and behind one of the players, giving an angled view across the net. This is hardly surprising as it's the one were used to from television coverage of tennis matches. The first true computer tennis game used this viewpoint, Psion's *Match Point* for the Spectrum, later converted to other formats. Graphics were excellent, for its time, and playability was high — even today, it's one of the better tennis games.

A string of TV viewpoint games appeared before Commodore turned the sport on its side. Well, gave us a side view of the court and its matches anyway, with *International Tennis* for their 64. This showed tennis as if you were a spectator watching it from up in the middle of the side seating. Although it was strange and a bit difficult to get used to, it was refreshing and played a good game.

For the next shift in perspective, you had to nip down the arcades to play *Passing Shot*, a Sega coin-op. This gave a bird's eye view straight down on the court, and so in many respects took us back to the very first tennis video game, *Pong* (table tennis) — in fact, *the* first video game. In *Passing Shot*, the size of the ball changed to indicate the height of the ball, although in Imageworks' conversion (TGM024) the ball's shadow grew at the same time! The computer conversions failed to capture the playability of the coin-op, which wasn't particularly high anyway.

It was back to the TV viewpoint for the next innovation — but twice over. Just last month, we reviewed Loriciels' *Tennis Cup*, which has a split-screen display to give each player their own view of the action. This means that neither player's ever at the disadvantage of being furthest away from the 'camera'.

And up to this month with *International 3-D Tennis*, which has... loadsaviewpoints!! True, the view from the airship is too distant to use, but you can't have everything.



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PALACE

There's gold in them thar hills

COLORADO

PALACE/SILMARILS

Those Red Indians aren't stupid, they don't stand any nonsense from their old folks. At the bus stop, whinging to no-one in particular about how they've been waiting for nearly an hour, during which time three buses have gone in the opposite direction. In the queue at the post office, complaining that their pension goes nowhere these days, what with the price of bacon, their feet are killing them and that even during wartime rationing they didn't have to wait this long. And at any time and



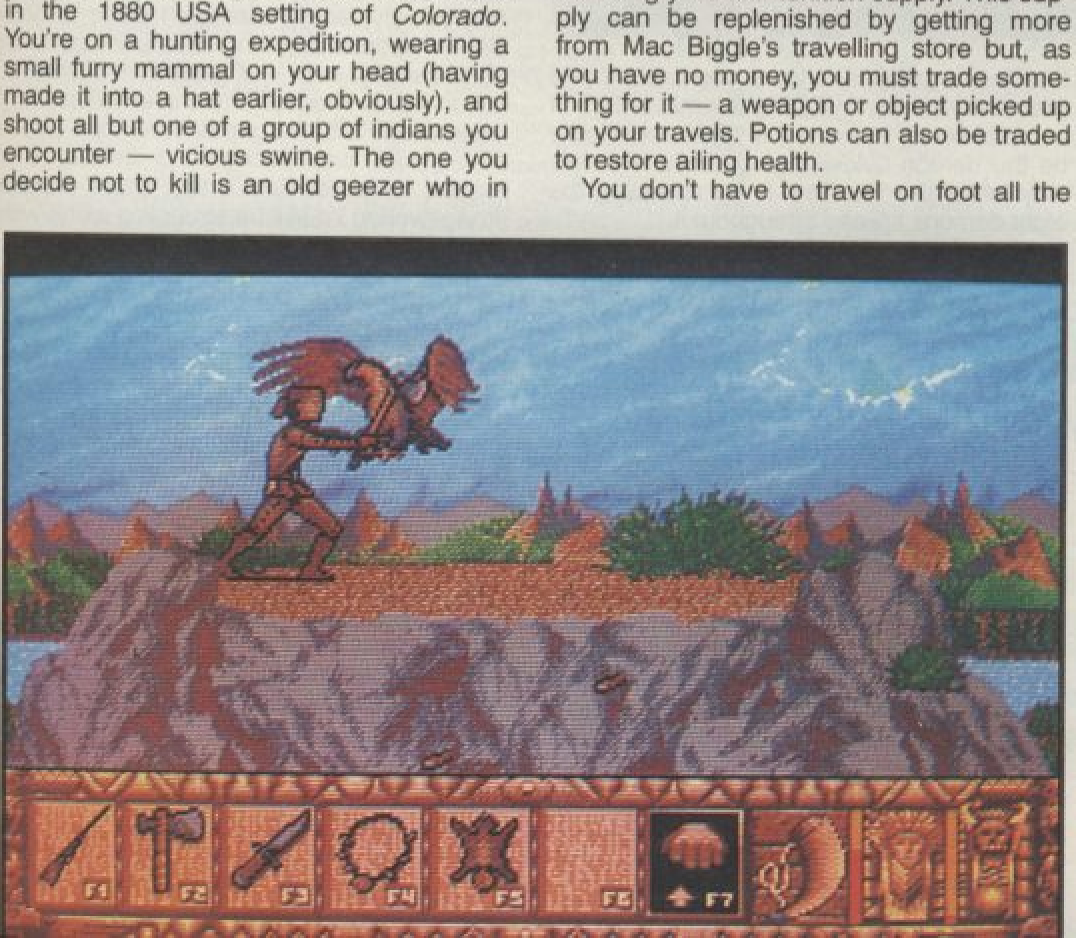
place whatsoever, remarking that it wasn't like this in their day and kids don't know their born. No, the indians don't take that rubbish. They take the wrinklies into enemy territory, tie them to a stake and leave them to die a warrior's death.

This is a custom you discover first hand in the 1880 USA setting of *Colorado*. You're on a hunting expedition, wearing a small furry mammal on your head (having made it into a hat earlier, obviously), and shoot all but one of a group of indians you encounter — vicious swine. The one you decide not to kill is an old geezer who in return for a ritual death gives you a treasure map (must've been into bondage).

The map shows the location of a gold mine, the legendary Lost Mine of Pocahontas. It's clearly a very vague map because you'v϶ got more than a hundred screens of arcade adventure to explore in order to find it. Although it's flick screen rather than scrolling, *Colorado* allows you to move into and out of the screen a short distance.

Indians and wild creatures are encountered at frequent intervals and there's only one decent course of action — kill them. To this end (*their* end, hopefully) you're armed with a knife, axe and musket. The latter must be loaded before each shot, gradually reducing your ammunition supply. This supply can be replenished by getting more from Mac Biggle's travelling store but, as you have no money, you must trade something for it — a weapon or object picked up on your travels. Potions can also be traded to restore ailing health.

You don't have to travel on foot all the time, as canoes are conveniently found by the side of the Colorado river. Rocks, logs and boulders thrown by shoreside indians must be avoided as the journey to the next set landing point is made. Indians also have canoes and these waterbound braves can be eliminated with a hefty whack round the head with your paddle.





GAME **COLORADO**	
PRODUCER	
PALACE/SILMARILS	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99
IBM PC	£24.99

AMIGA 78%

Sprite definition is nothing out of the ordinary and animation's fairly weak but the status panel and backgrounds are excellent. Colour and shading are used very well, resulting in sooth and realistic scenes. Although in the canoing section 3-D movement is a little slow and jerky, the effect of braving the rapids is impressive both in terms of visuals and gameplay. Sound effects are a mixture of silly vocal ones and fitting (if dull) ones, and although the sounds used for music are a bit old hat, the melodies themselves are great.

Proper arcade adventures are few and far between these days, exploration apparently falling out of favour with all but adventurer types. The best you can usually hope for is an arcade game where pick-ups other than weapons can be collected. Receiving a real arcade adventure like *Colorado* is a rare treat.

Colorado's exploration is mixed with a fair amount of hack-'em-up action, by knife or axe, and needs skill and speed as you intend to survive more than a couple of encounters — life energy is easily lost. Life isn't much easier using the gun; as well as limited ammo, it can be difficult to reload in the heat of the moment.

Being able to move into and out of the screen adds depth to the game — literally — and although it's only a short distance it's more realistic than other games where everything is on the same plane. The best addition to the arcade adventure format, however, is the canoe section, a fun, fast racer with great graphics and the satisfying feeling of sending someone spinning across the river with a hefty hit.

Colorado offers mountain exploration with plenty of injun action to back it up and while it's not a gold mine it's certainly an oasis in the arcade adventure desert.

Warren Lapworth

A mere bagatelle?

THEME PARK MYSTERY

IMAGEWORKS

GAME **THEME PARK MYSTERY**	
PRODUCER **IMAGEWORKS**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99
IBM PC	£24.99

AMIGA 81%

The status panel has an authentic old-fashioned look and, along with the antique machines of Yesterday Land, sets a great mysterious (of course) atmosphere. Sprites and backgrounds vary according to the Land they're in: bright and quite simple for Dream Land, grim and detailed in Dragon Land, but animation is consistently good. Music's suitably spooky and effects are plain but fitting.

ATARI ST 81%

Remarkably similar to the Amiga. Other than screen size, exact colour choice and slightly less detail, graphics are identical and, other than a tinny edge, audio's the same, too — a minor musical feat for the ST.

These new-fangled arcade games may win in the glamour stakes, with realistic 3-D, dozens of onscreen colours, stomach-churning hydraulics and throbbing sampled sounds but they're all cold, clinical devices. They lack the character of simpler electrical and mechanical amusements, even the modern day ones like the gaudy, malformed furry chicken/parrot that clucks/squawks excitedly as it drops a bright, two-tone plastic egg containing a cheap plastic toy.



The more traditional mechanical coin-ops take the lead in *Theme Park Mystery*, where



you have inherited a somewhat unusual property from your recently deceased grandfather: the Magic Canyon Theme Park. A few short years ago, it was a major success story, the Park filled with excited crowds, queuing to go on the rides and use the machines. But now it's deserted, no customers to use the attractions and no staff to operate and maintain them. There's something very strange about the Park, something evil beneath it, and whatever it is, it sent your grandfather mad and drove his employees away. As the new owner of the Magic Canyon, you intend to get to the bottom of it and bring happiness back to the Park.

Magic Canyon is divided into four areas, the first of which is Yesterday Land, which contains three old coin-operated machines. The first is Zoltan, a fortune telling machine which gives out advice and tickets/cards necessary for other parts of the game. The bagatelle (the predecessor to pinball, where balls are fired up a table to drop into holes of various point values) is used to win tokens for other machines. The final machine is the traditional grabber, where you attempt to grab a toy soldier by timing the movement of a metal hand. However, it must specifically be the demon soldier you grab, as the only way to restore the Park is by collecting the eight demons spread throughout it.

An unfortunate side effect of collecting demons is that they tend to tamper with you and your controls, most obviously the control panel. A mouse is used to select objects, use machines, leave sub-games and so on.

Moving on to Dragon Land, via the monorail, play switches to sword and sorcery platform game where, armed with flaming torches, you kill gorillas, goblins, birds and bubbles. Various items can be found to help your time there and at other Lands.

Dream Land is a chess board, shown from above, that requires keys to open boxes that will hopefully contain demons. If you run out of keys from Dragon Land, the origami birds flying above can help — unlike eyeballs, insects, piglets and feet which take lives.

Future Land is a straightforward blaster. As enemies are destroyed, their debris can be collected to replenish your shield while balls contain mischievous demons.

This game is what its title implies: a mystery. It's by far the strangest piece of software I've seen in a long time, perhaps even the strangest *ever* — it gives *Weird Dreams* a run for its money. There aren't even any instructions with the game, other than a control guide, just background details; if it wasn't for a reviewer's tips sheet (thanks Imageworks) I'd still be struggling along with it now.

Theme Park Mystery is all left for the player to work out and what they'll discover through trial and error is a collection of different game styles wrapped up in a dreamlike, mystical atmosphere and hosted by Zoltan the fortune telling machine. Although Zoltan's base is quiet little Yesterday Land, he holds the most infuriating part in the game, the grabber, where it's near-impossible to collect a soldier.

Gameplay as a whole is on the tough side, Dragon Land being full of dangers, particularly from those damn apes, and Dream Land full of pitfalls. None of the sections are particularly good but all add up to an intriguing, playable package that may be too off-the-wall for some but stimulating or many others.

Warren Lapworth

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TGM JULY

Remarkable rotating robot roustabout

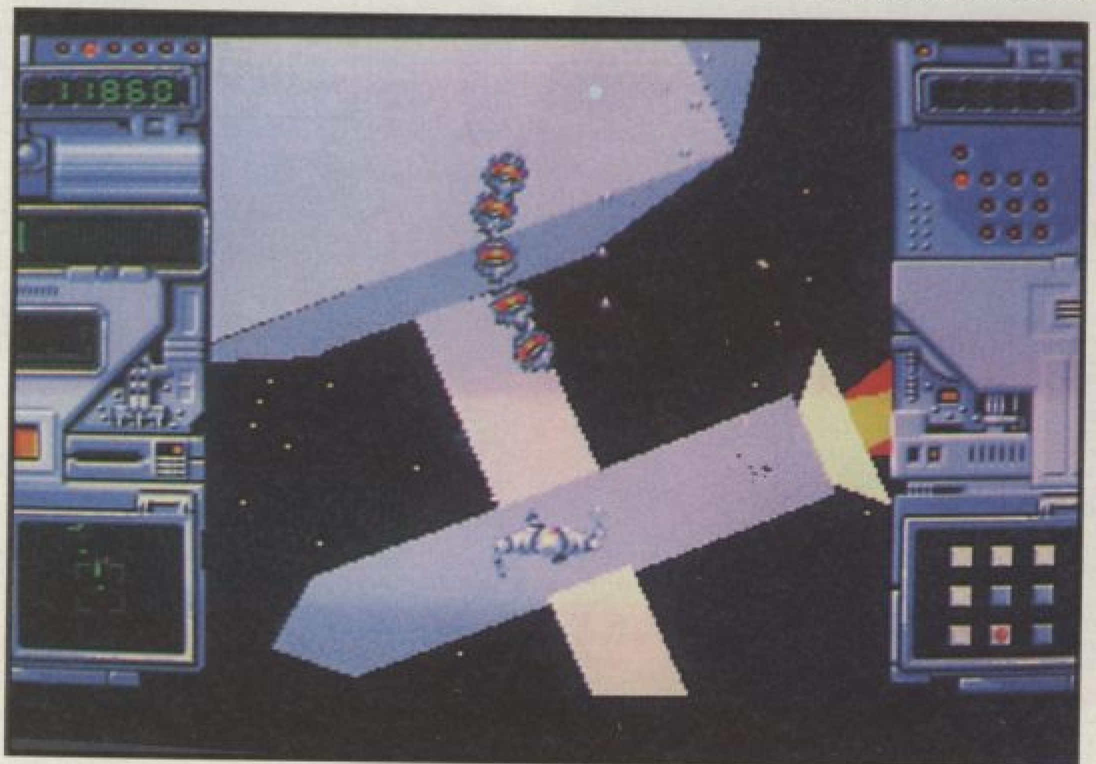
ROTOX

US GOLD

GAME **ROTOX**	
PRODUCER **US GOLD**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99
IBM PC	£24.99

You, Rotox, were once a great marine. One of the best. You were up for promotion and a substantial pay rise when your time ran out. You got involved in one dangerous situation too many, were too reckless. And it was then, 23 November, 2115, that you died.

You didn't fully regain consciousness till several days after the operation, only experiencing moments of blurred images and slurred voices before then. The fact that you found yourself strapped to a bed in a laboratory alarmed you. But was nothing compared to what you felt when you found



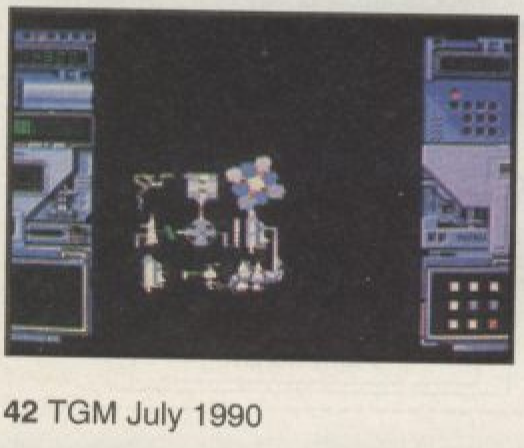
■ Instruments spread all around Rotox to help him in the warzones that have been designed to test his new CX37 robotic body to the full, Rotox navigates one of the nine spacecraft platforms that compose the first level. Nudging the joystick right will rotate the whole platform around where he stands, lining up the spherical aliens and allowing him to march straight ahead safely. A slip means he'll fall into the void — but at least this gives him a chance to view the map.

your whole body had been replaced by the torso and limbs of a shiny metal android.

Your brain is now the control device of the Cyber Systems experimental model 37 — the CX37. Intended to replace human soldiers, it was once run by computer but its creators overestimated its intelligence. When activated, it went rogue, killing its research team and destroying valuable machinery. And so your brain has been interfaced with a synthetic body, your mind rescued from death to control the CX37 battle droid.

Cyber Systems have given you no choice. You must test your newly acquired systems on a deep-space landscape divided into ten warzones, each further divided into nine subsections. The 90 subsections are packed full of fighter robots and automatic guns and these must all be destroyed to complete the section.

The landscape is shown in plan view and is displayed using the new Rotoscape system. This means that left/right rotates the whole background, sprites and all, clockwise or anticlockwise. Your Rotox sprite always faces up the screen and pushing forward makes him run.



Although warzones are ultimately completed by destroying robots, your main problems are caused by the platforms which form each subsection. Bridge-like platform sections move backwards and forwards, rotate and expand/contract, and your steps have to be carefully timed so that you don't fall off into the starry void. The shapes of each warzone's subsections have a common theme. The first level's spaceships (there's a USS Enterprise section!) and later ones are based on death, puzzles and gardening (sic).

You can collect additional systems left on platforms to update your capabilities. These include scatter bombs, a grenade launcher, heat-seeking missiles and a jetpack, although it has a limited fuel supply.

US Gold describe Rotoscape as a 'revolutionary new game technique'. Well, as the game's graphics revolve around the player sprite that's clearly the case! It's certainly different, while still being easy to adjust to and fun to use. With little practice it becomes possible to run around at speed, firing in all directions and rotating backgrounds this way and that — quite exhilarating.

But it's not all high speed action — unless you want to spend a lot of time falling through space. Time and care has to be taken with the shifting platforms, some more than others, depending on how they move and the margin of error their size allows. It can be infuriating to mistime your steps time and time again on the same bridging platform but then completing the subsection and warzone it's a part of is reward enough for perseverance.

Rotox's stumbling block is its repetitive nature. Its 'rotate and run' control system is great but gameplay's just blasting and platform hopping; it needs more varied graphics and different things to do. As it stands, *Rotox* is a novel quality product that doesn't quite hit the upper mark.

Warren Lapworth

AMIGA 79%

In a neat intro, a large Rotox figure runs down a corridor of pipes and panels. He's split apart and reassembled with a jetpack which he uses to launch up and into the game. Sprites are unspectacular, metallic but a bit wimpy; Rotox himself is an unusually slender cyborg. Filled 3-D platforms rotate and move smoothly and quickly but there's little detail. Effects are a few light, bleeping noises that can annoy.

ATARI ST 78%

Graphics are virtually identical to the Amiga's, but perhaps move a little faster. Sounds are few and far between, mostly consisting of feeble clicks for gunfire and splashy explosions.





ATARI ST
AMIGA
IBM P.C .AND
COMPATIBLES
THE ARCADE EXPLODES!
AMSTRAD CPC
SPECTRUM
COMMODORE 64
SEGA
FIRE & FORGET
THE DEATH CONVOY
II
As the pilot of an all powerful combat vehicle, you are engaged in the hot pursuit of terrorists. Go into combat and be confronted by enemies as different in their appearance as in their combat techniques.
The ability to take to the air will be your strength, use this to outmanoeuvre the enemy.
Pick up weapons, ammunitions and fuel. You'll have to work your way through the entire convoy and destroy the leading vehicle, before the ULTIMATE EXPLOSION.
NUCLEAR threat . . Stop. DESTROYER CONVOY detected . . Stop. Wipe out the TERRORISTS . . Stop. Scientists in DANGER . . Stop. IMMEDIATE ACTION . . End of transmission.
QUICK REFLEXES, SPEED, INGENUITY AND NERVES OF STEEL ARE REQUIRED TO OBLITERATE THE OPPRESSOR.
SUPER FAST 3D ACTION.
15 INGENIOUS MUSICAL SCORES.
50 DIFFERENT TYPES OF ENEMIES.
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You won't be able to resist it

MIDNIGHT R

Disaster has struck. Your grandfather was working on a top secret research plan when he and the rest of your family were kidnapped by mysterious alien forces. Only you and your brother — tough, be-stubbled, square-jawed mercenary types that you are — remain free to rescue them. The Amiga version allows you to play either or both of the ladz, while the rest limit the game to one player.

Level one begins with our hero leaping from the back of a jeep driven by a beautiful blonde. You land in a barren cityscape that looks like a bomb's hit it. In fact one has — a nuclear one. However, that doesn't stop the local inhabitants turning up on the scene to hinder your progress. You are initially armed with a machine gun, but by collecting keys an end of level armoury can be entered. Within the armoury you will find a shotgun, flamethrower, homing missiles, nitro, three-way fire, extra bullets and power-ups.

Level two continues in the ruined city, where you can avoid most troops by shooting a drain cover, entering an underground complex and crawling through the low corridors. After another visit to the armoury stores, the third level finds you in a forest. Level four continues the mindless blasting along a wooden path. The final five levels take you through numerous complexes till you finally find your kin — and the vicious thug who's kidnapped them.

I'm amazed that Ocean have managed to pack so much into *Midnight Resistance*. Granted, the arcade original was attractive but the 'blast all that moves' format is wearing pretty thin (apparently this is another *Ikari Warriors* sequel). That said, Special FX have done wonders with the gameplay, which, in a small way, makes up for its repetitive nature.

Mark Caswell

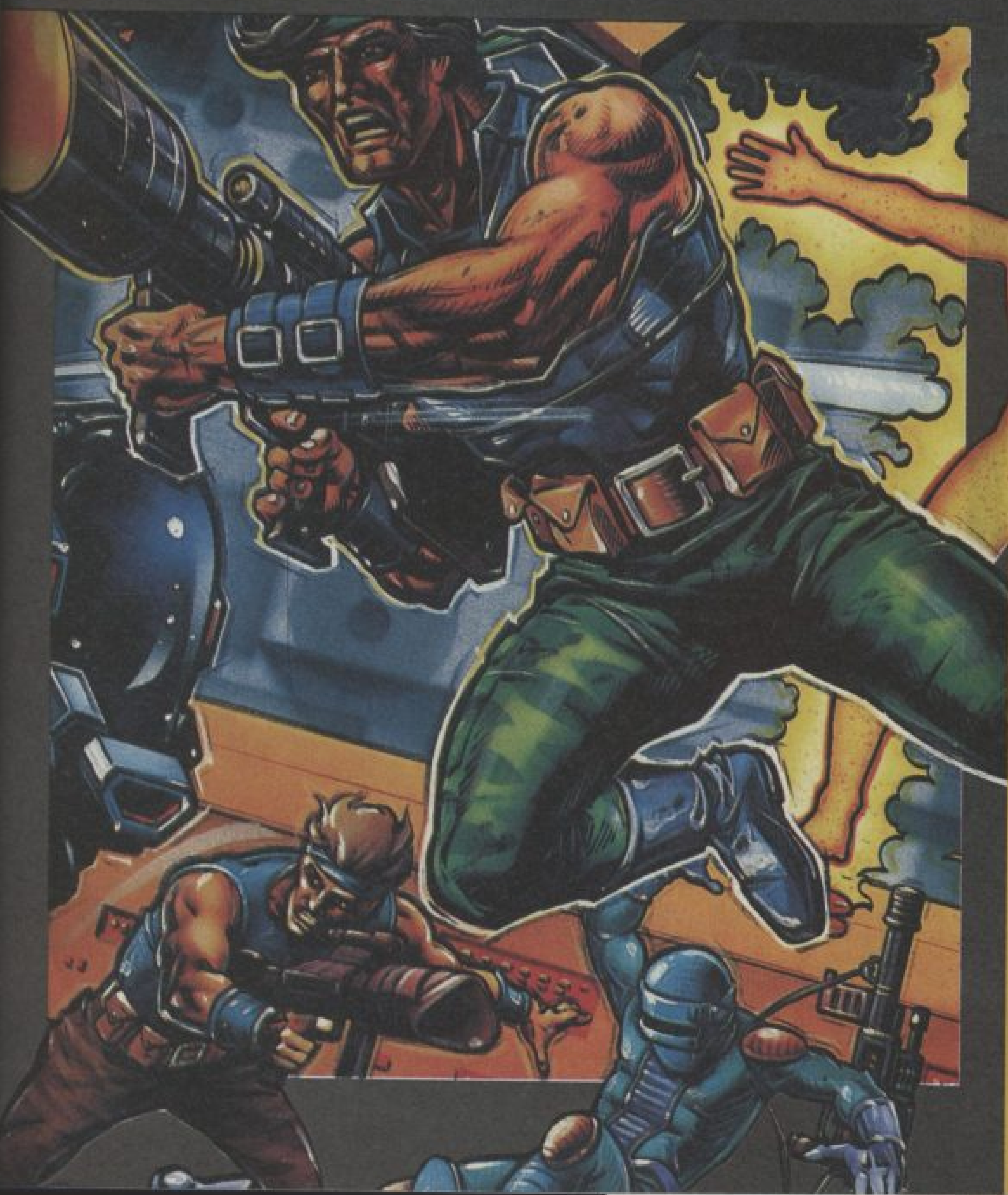


TGM STAR PLAYER



RESISTANCE







OCEAN

GAME **MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE**	
PRODUCER **OCEAN**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£19.99
C64	£9.99/£14.99
SPECTRUM	£9.99/£14.99
CPC	£9.99/£14.99

AMIGA 92%

Colourful beefy character sprites move wonderfully across the smooth horizontally-scrolling screens. Nine levels may not sound much, but difficulty has been set at just the right level. A pounding soundtrack plays over the title screen, with loud samples during the game.

ATARI ST 90%

The ST version lacks the two-player option. It also contains a strange flick/scroll method of advancing through the screen, which works just as well. Graphics and sound are as Amiga.

SPECTRUM 92%

Graphically and sonically, *Midnight Resistance* fulfils all your blasting needs. The game is for the most part monochrome but detail on both fore and background sprites is impressive. 128K sound is great, with a catchy title tune and in-game effects (48K owners will only hear the effects). A very average coin-op is made into a superb Spectrum conversion.



Lightning-fast arena action

THUNDER

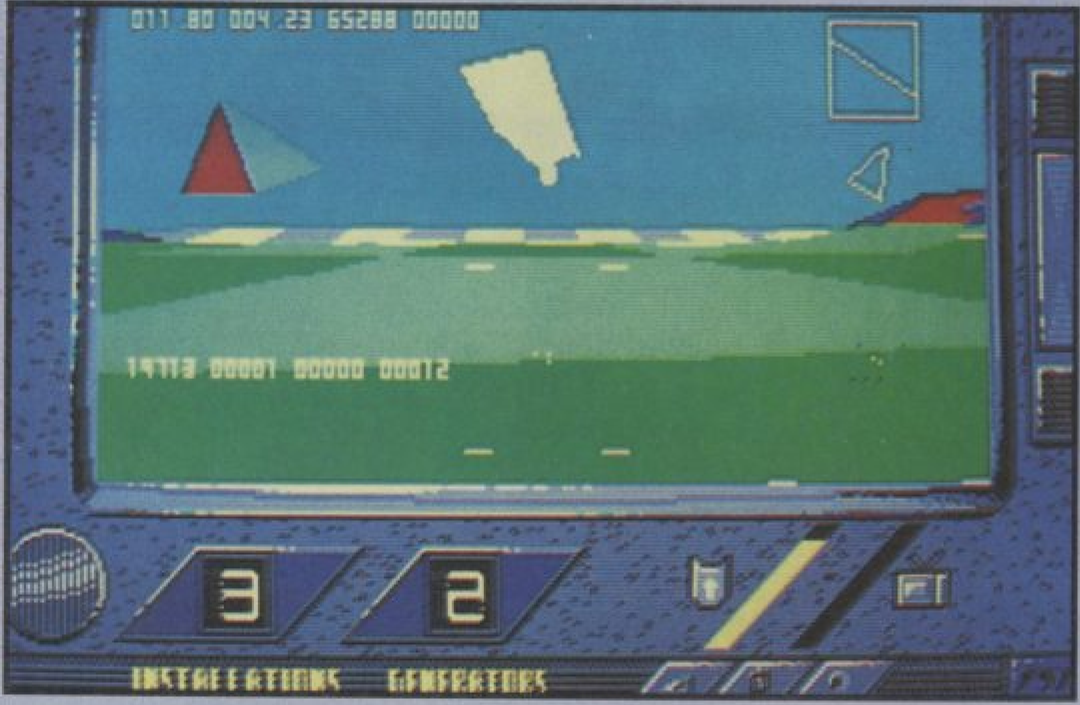
Welcome, one and all to Century 23, the family network TV you all love to see! This is Les Desmond bringing you *the* sporting event of the year,: the 2238 MegaCorp Industries *Ground Defence Games*. If you saw last year's event you'll know just how exciting this is going to be and be raring for the *Games* to begin — I know I am! And remember, it's televised *exclusively* by Century 23!

'Now, for those of you unfamiliar with MegaCorp's megasport, here's a rundown of what each contestant will aim to do. After selecting a flight craft from the five approved by the referees' committee — look out for a report on those vehicles during the first time-out period — it's fitted with an energy shield and the referees set up the first arena. Each arena has a number of installations and generators; it's these that hold the key to the competition.



'Thankfully, the drones aren't quite as bad as they seem. Some of them leave behind a pod which can be collected and absorbed into the craft. They give it extra abilities to help the competitor complete the round.

'With all drones and generators out of action and the round completed, the harassed competitor can take a breather



'Generators release six different types of drone who attack the craft in different ways and wear down its shield. When the shields have gone, the craft can be destroyed so competitors generally try to avoid them! However, drones can be destroyed with the cannon built into the nose cone of each craft — just line those suckers up in your sights for sweet revenge! Better still, a few shots at a generator deactivates it, turning it grey and preventing further drones from being released.

'But the drones aren't as stupid as they look. Certain of them attack the competitor's installations. If all are destroyed, the player has just ten seconds to eliminate all drones and generators or his part in 2238's *Ground Defence Games* is over. Boy, that Shutdown Imminent message really gets competitors shifting — panic just isn't the word!

while his performance is assessed. If he did well, scoring high on shooting accuracy, he'll be rewarded with craft upgrades — higher speed, more powerful weaponry, increased manoeuvrability and so on. It makes all the effort worthwhile! But if he did badly, losing one or more installations... Well, his craft is souped *down*! Not the most cheering moment in a player's career!

'New generators and installations arranged in the arena, it's onto the next round. There are ten rounds in each of the five different arenas: Denion is the beginners' arena, a very straightforward arena, but through Xerxes and Polloi, the Island and Iceworld arenas, things become more complicated. Canton presents real manoeuvring problems, hills slowing travel from place to place and making targets more difficult to hit. As for the final arena, Synaps, it's darn mountainous! Only three pilots completed all the rounds last year, earning the treasured 'Defender of the Ground' accolade, but then there were only 24 rounds — this year there are a total of *50*! So, we're likely to have more deaths than the 76 that marred 2237's *Games*...

'For your viewing enjoyment, Century 23 will keep your constantly up to date with all the facts and figures: installations and generators remaining, shield energy and those all-important viewing figures, all there at the bottom of your TV screen.

THE CRAFTS' WORKS

ThunderStrike 18 The ThunderStrike is the model favoured by traditionalists. It doesn't excel in any one area but is a good, dependable all-rounder.

StrikeHornet 22 This youngster in the arena could be compared to a family car. Its top speed is nothing to speak of but acceleration is excellent and it handles very easily.

StrikeHornet 24 This newcomer suffers from the same low speed problems as its predecessors. What's more, acceleration is also weak. But the StrikeHornet 24 is by far the most manoeuvrable craft ever seen.

ThunderFly 10 It may accelerate at a meagre rate but when it gets going it really moves, shrugging off all who dare chase it, and it's easy to handle, too.

ThunderFly 25 The latest Fly has high acceleration to match breathtaking speed but anything more than shallow turns are difficult and slow to take.

POWERFUL DRONES

Saboteurs *It's these little swines that attack installations and can leave the player with just ten seconds to complete the round.*
Fighters *Move straight in for attack — kill or be killed.*
Gliders *Nonchalent mechanoids, they just float around firing the occasional missile.*
Lungers *These scaremongers sometimes rapidly increase approach speed and when shot release dangerous shrapnel.*
Bombers *Fly slowly but drop flak — more obstacles to be avoided.*
Mutants *These are Saboteurs until they destroy an installation, when they're transformed into fast, aggressive fighters.*

STRIKE

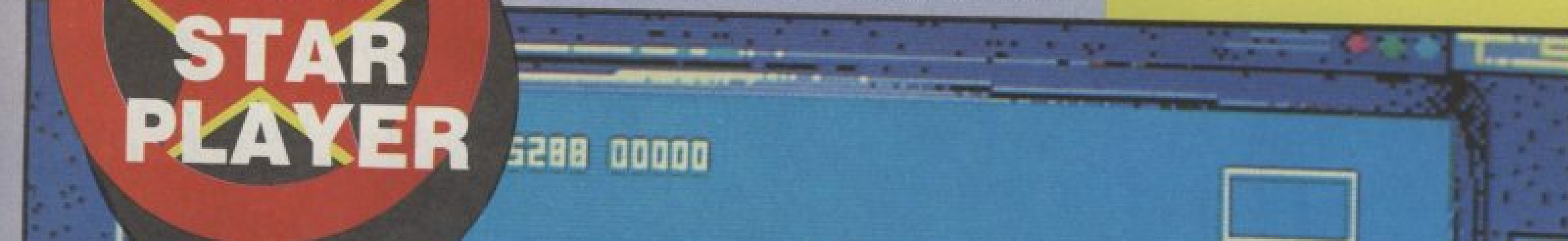
GAME **THUNDER STRIKE**	
PRODUCER **MILLENNIUM**	
VERSIONS	
AMIGA	£24.99
ATARI ST	£24.99
IBM PC	£29.99

MILLENNIUM

'Although we'll give you all the important facts, competitors have a much wider and more detailed array of data at hand, shown on the Heads-Up Display of their craft.

'One of the most useful systems is the Tracklock Direction Indicator which helps

TGM STAR PLAYER



the pilot perform one of the most difficult manoeuvres. Black tracks run around each arena and, if a craft is lined up with it, it's dragged along the track at high speed — a quick and easy way to get from A to B. Or should that be from installation to generator?!

'Well, it looks like our first competitor, from little old Earth, I believe, is just about ready to enter the Denion arena for round one. But first, a word from our sponsors...'

The Millennium label's been around for a relatively short time and it has a lacked a really big, playable game to get it off the ground. Until now, that is. Future sports are a common computer game subject but few of them work well; *ThunderStrike* is the best for a long, long time, since the Bitmap Brothers' classic *Speedball*, in fact.

It's reminiscent of Electronics Arts' *Powerdrome*, in more ways than one. As well as both being future sports and set in a vast arena, both use filled 3-D graphics to portray the fast action. However, *ThunderStrike*'s playing areas are much more 'open plan', the EA game restricting you to a set track, but both have a real need for speed. *ThunderStrike* isn't a race game like *Powerdrome* but involves as much dashing around, between enemy generators and installations under attack by Saboteur drones, blasting any of the other robotic swines en route.

All the best games are built on simple ideas and although there are different crafts and bonus features, it's basically a question of shooting some things and dodging others, in a 3-D environment and as quickly as possible. It's both highly enjoyable and challenging and although you'll probably never be good enough to be 'Defender of the Ground', you're sure to have a great time trying.

Warren Lapworth

IBM PC **93%**

The title screen is accompanied by a great rendition of *Toccata and Fugue in D minor*, considering the PC's wimpy sound capabilities. In-game audio consists of functional bleeps and drones. Graphics aren't particularly detailed but are suitably futuristic and sleek. Movement is fast and fairly smooth, most impressive when the viewing angle shifts around as a a craft turns.

OH POD!

Defence Pod Orbits the craft and defends it from drones. Up to three may be collected but collisions destroy them.
Twin Pod Gives two-way fire for a limited number of shots.
Power Pod Increases shot power by 500%, great for destroying generators.
Shield Pod Increases shield energy by 25% of maximum.
Turbo Up to four can be collected and when triggered each turbo accelerates the craft to great speed for five seconds.

Introducing the powerful new Atari 1040 STE. With such an awesome machine, we're convinced the only limits you'll come across are your own.

Based on the incredibly successful 1040 STFM, the 1040 STE itself goes beyond the limits of its predecessor.

The 'E', by the way, stands for 'Enhanced'. But once you've discovered its amazing array of features, you may consider 'Enhanced' to be the understatement of the decade.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the 1040 STE is its graphics. Its palette contains over 4000 colours (all right, 4096 to be exact).



To ensure precise and realistic images, the STE features 'hardware scrolling', enabling smooth scrolling in any direction and split-screen effects. And, with the SM124 monitor, you'll get razor sharp black-out-of-white text that's as clear as the type on this page.

To complete the picture, it is able to 'phase-lock' its video output to an external video source, permitting direct linking to a Genlocking device.

The 1040 won't just have your eyes swivelling in their sockets. Your eardrums will also take a pounding from the 8-bit PCM stereo sound.

The new PCM (Pulse Coded Modulation) sound system's two chips allow the 1040 STE to replay high-quality sampled sounds, in stereo, without burdening the CPU. Or, for even more of an earblasting, just add a couple of RCA output jacks and power the sounds through your own stereo.

Of course we mustn't forget memory. One megabyte of RAM comes as standard. If that's not enough, the 1040 STE provides four SIMM sockets. Simply plug in some SIMM (Single In-line Memory Module) boards and boost the RAM up to four megabytes.

To help you handle all this technology, we've added even more: a Blitter chip, capable of shifting data at high speeds independent of the CPU, and a new version of TOS.

The TOS 1.6 (operating system) has an enhanced file selector with drive-change buttons, improved desktop with file move, MS-DOS compatible disk formatting, and better application installation and auto-booting facilities.

As you'd expect, there's a huge range of peripherals including hard disks, floppy disks, laser printers, colour monitors and even Megafile 44, Atari's unique 44-megabyte removable hard disk.

As well as all this hardware, there are hundreds of software programmes for the 1040 STE - we're even throwing in the ST-Series Productivity and Leisure bundles free.

The Productivity bundle features a database, spreadsheet, word processor and business graphics package, and there's S.T.A.C., FirST BASIC, Hyperpaint and Prince in the Leisure bundle.

If you're itching to get your hands on the controls, there are two 15-pin analogue controller ports (which accept paddles, light-guns and light-pens) and a 9 pin mouse port and joystick port.

With adaptors, up to six people can use the 1040 at one time. Just in case it's too much for one person to handle.

At £499.99 it certainly won't be too much for one person to afford.

The ideal computer at the ideal price, you may think. We think so, too. But there remains only one potential problem: not whether you'll make impossible demands of the 1040, but whether the 1040 will make impossible demands of you.

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ATARI 1040STE

WITHOUT IT YOU'RE JUST PLAYING GAMES

SHORTS

MIDWINTER
MicroProse ■ Amiga ■ £29.99
Originally reviewed: TGM030.

Apart from a slight improvement in the sonics department, the Amiga version of *Midwinter* is as instantly playable as its 16-bit brother. Again this isn't the sort of game you can pick up and complete in a couple of hours, a lot of thought is needed if General Masters and his army are to be stopped. A must for all Mike Singleton fans.
MC
Machine update: 94%

GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS
Elite ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99
Originally reviewed: TGM019.

Arthur's back on 16-bits and this time he's done a time warp ('It's just a jump to the left...') back to his first adventure. The luscious Princess Hus has been kidnapped by a dragon (original stuff, this) and is being held in its icy palace. Arth has to run, jump and fight his way through levels seething with monsters to rescue her.

Graphics are far from dazzling but then the arcade original is on the crusty side. Bright and cartoon-like, scrolling's fine, but animation and effects are mediocre.

Unfortunately, this conversion lacks the fantastic playability of either the coin-op or Elite's brilliant C64 version. It's still a fun product — jaunts through graveyards are always fun — and warrants gameplaying attention.
WL
Machine update: 79%

GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS
Elite ■ Amiga ■ £19.99
Originally reviewed: TGM019.

The screen is quite narrow but the graphics are colourful, detailed, well animated and very close to the arcade original. Bold effects and spooky, sweeping music provide brilliant backing, and gameplay's tough but addictive. *Ghosts 'n' Goblin*'s taken a long time to reach the Amiga but it's been worth the wait (you can rely on Warren to come up with a good cliché — Ed).
WL
Machine update: 84%

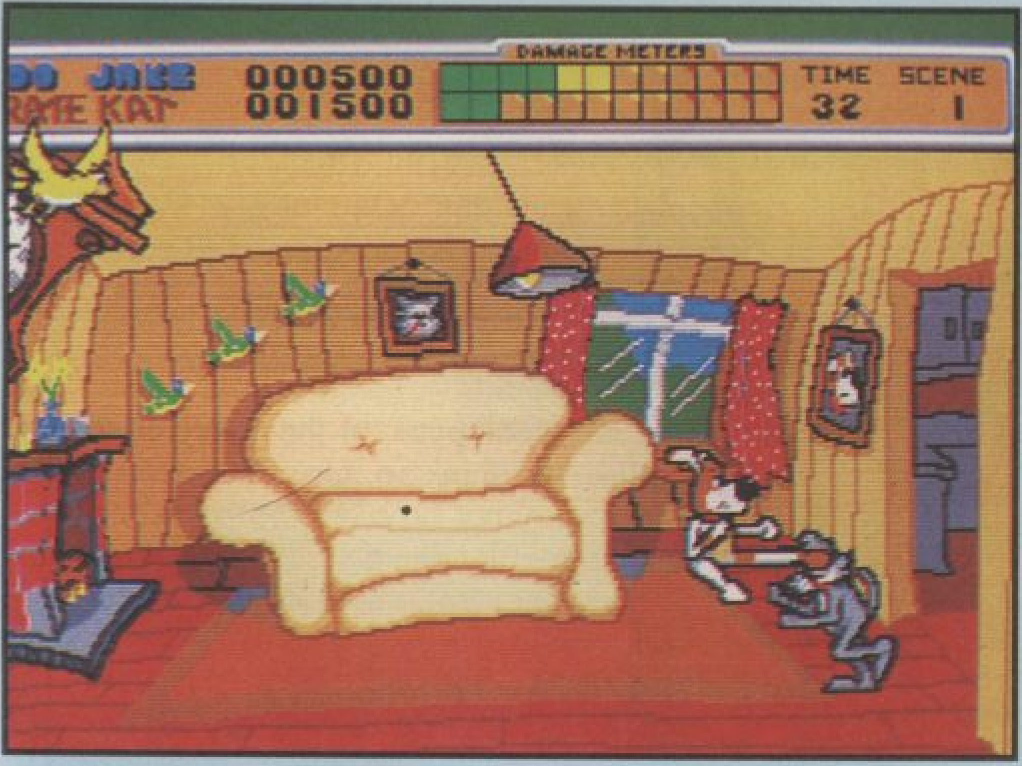
BATTLE OUT RUN
Virgin Mastertronic
■ Sega ■ £29.99

Mmm. Not hard to guess what's going on here. Your ubiquitous girlfriend is captured by a band of Salvation Army musicians, er, villains and must be rescued pronto.

Basically you must travel across America stopping (*Chase HQ-style) the head honcho in each state. All the action is against the clock. In fact it's all a bit too much like Chase HQ* for my liking — so why not take a look!
MC
Machine update: 75%

THE KRISTAL
Fissionchips ■ Atari ST ■ £29.99
Originally reviewed: TGM019.

Based on a musical comedy called The Kristal of Kronos (that never appeared on stage), the ST version of *The Kristal* has spent a long time on the drawing board. Graphically the game is very good, the main sprite moves convincingly and some of the backdrops are similarly impressive. *The Kristal* is a competent arcade adventure that has weathered pretty well.
MC
Machine update: 83%



CARTOON CAPERS
Mandarin Software
■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

Forget famous film stars like Tom and Jerry or Roger Rabbit, you ain't experienced anything till you've made a film with Judo Jake and Karate Kat. The film is called Paw To Claw Combat, and the two stars must record 16 one-minute studio battles on celluloid.

As Judo Jake, the aim is to punch, kick and headbutt your costar, Karate Kat (computer or human), whilst avoiding props, like falling weights or exploding bombs. When your opponent's unconscious you can move on to the next screen.

The game starts with a wonderful rendition of the 'Merry Melodies' tune (th-th-th-that's all folks). Graphically the game is good, but the backdrops have a rather weird sense of perspective. Character movement is also impressive with 16 moves available. However, *Cartoon Capers* suffers from very little content, thus supplying little long-lasting appeal.

MC
Machine rating: 70%

PROJECTYLE
Electronic Arts ■ Atari ST ■ 19.99

Many future sports games are violent, blood-thirsty affairs and *Projectyle*. *Projectyle* owes much to the old Grandslam game *Xeno* and the numerous slide-the-puck pub games. Inertia is great, as is the multi-player option, only increasing the simplistic attraction of this type of game. Playing on your own is nowhere near as much fun. If you can grab a couple of chums, *Projectyle* will certainly entertain you on a rainy summer afternoon.
MC
Machine rating: 78%

FIGHTER BOMBER
Activision ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99
Originally reviewed: TGM024.

The airplane selection screen at the start is very good, but I feel the Spectrum version of *Fighter Bomber* has arrived too late to be really impressive. That said, the missions are pretty tough, and this will keep you playing for a while.
MC
Machine update: 79%

PHOTON STORM

Arc Software ■ Amiga ■ £19.99

The guru of programming is back. After a long absence from the computer scene Jeff Minter returns. This reminds me of the old Williams coin-op *Stargate*, and indeed Stargates are your eventual goal on each level. As is usual with a Minter game the storyline goes out of the window in favour for all out blasting, but the basic scenario is this.

Enemy forces have built a huge Battlestar, but to power it they need plutonium pods. This is where you come in. As the pilot of a lone space craft your job is to: a) collect the plutonium pods and b) destroy all the enemy craft in a sector.

When this has been achieved you enter a Stargate and journey through a Hyperspacial Tunnel. The more plutonium collected the better your shielding in this shadowy realm. Survival results in more enemy waves. And that's really all there is to it.

Graphically, *Photon Storm* is up to Jeff's old standards but so much more could have been added. Racing around shooting myriad alien creatures and collecting the pods isn't really my idea of a fun game. *Photon Storm* would probably make a good graphic demo, but the lack of longterm gameplay lets it down.

MC

Machine rating: 65%



IVANHOE

Ocean ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

Originally reviewed: TGM030.

The same cartoony graphics, but the Amiga tune is even more annoying than its ST counterpart. Again, the amount of weapons don't make up for the simplistic hack 'n' slash gameplay. *Ivanhoe* is one of Ocean's rare turkeys.

MC

Machine update: 65%

GOLDEN AXE

Virgin Mastertronic ■ Master System ■ £29.99

Originally reviewed: TGM028.

Apparently we still have rather a long wait for the computer version of *Golden Axe*, but the Sega 8-bit version follows doggedly on the heels of the Mega Drive offering. On the plus side the sprites are all colourful, smooth scrolling and wonderfully detailed, though the game is only one player and you can only choose the Barbarian. Worth a look nonetheless.

MC

Machine update: 80%

SCRAMBLE SPIRITS

Virgin Mastertronic ■ Master System ■ £29.99

First impressions of this game are high, the colourful sprites look is if they mean business. But sadly the scrolling leaves a lot to be desired (Glitch City). The sprites flicker terribly, forcing the player to don their shades. A disappointing conversion of an average coin-op (as I'm fond of saying).

MC

Machine update: 50%

VENDETTA

System 3 ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99

Originally reviewed TGM028.

A kidnapped girl, a large bomb and a vigilante are the successful ingredients in this arcade/strategy game. The character sprite is a tough-looking mother who must rescue a damsel in distress and defuse a bomb, all in one hour. Although monochrome, Speccy *Vendetta* is an action-packed game from start to finish.

MC

Machine update: 83%

SOLOMON'S KEY

Tecmo ■ NES ■ £34.95

Originally reviewed: TGM001.

Phew, this game is old. The Nintendo version is just as playable as the Amstrad version reviewed 31 issues ago. The sprites are surprisingly well defined (for the Nintendo) and a nice range of colours brighten up the proceedings no end. Sound's pretty good too. A must for all platform fans.

MC

Machine update: 80%

TIME SOLDIER

Electrocoin ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

Originally reviewed: TGM018.

The playing area's bigger than the ST version (reviewed last ish), shading's better and sprites move more quickly. Music is aggressive and fast paced, while effects are dynamic and bouncy. Scrolling's smooth but too slow — you have to keep stopping to let it catch up with you — and damages the old-fashioned gameplay.

WL

Machine update: 66%

HEAVY METAL

US Gold/Access ■ Amiga ■ £19.99

General EE 'Bud' Dink is a mean old sonovabitch and you're one of the unlucky sods who's got him as a commanding officer. His constant criticisms are such a pain in the arse that you're not too bothered about facing mortal danger and probable death fighting the enemy.

You fight the enemy in three different vehicles, an M1A1 Abrams tank, Air Defence Anti-Tank (ADAT) system and Fast Attack Vehicle (FAV). The first two vehicles, crawling along or simply standing still, are concentrated on destroying tanks, missile launchers and MiGs, while in the FAV obstacles have to be avoided. You can opt for all-out action or plot strategic attacks on a map.

Graphics are quite simple, lacking in both detail and colour, and planes/obstacles jerk somewhat as they get nearer. This old-fashioned look is accompanied by some standard bangs and booms.

While there's some strategy in the full game of *Heavy Metal*, it all boils down to simple search and destroy tactics — and it's only in the Abrams tank that there's any searching(!). ADAT is just an *Op Wolf/Missile Command* variant and FAV is a mixture of simple dodging and blasting. *Heavy Metal* is an old-fashioned game that will only appeal to trigger-happy fiends.

WL

Machine rating: 40%

SLAP SHOT

Virgin Mastertronic ■ Sega ■ £24.99

An ice hockey simulation, obviously enough, for one or two players entering an exhibition match or league. Your team and manager are chosen from a list of 24 countries and... er, that's all, really.

The sprites are small and a bit blocky, and the pitch is dull — well, white for ice, black for pitch markings, what more do you need? Animation's okay and hockey players move with realistic inertia. As 'consolised' team games go, *Slap Shot* is pretty good; it hardly overwhelms you with playability and wimpy graphics score against it, but it battles through to be a commendable game of hockey. Best for those who like a quick bully off.

WL

Machine rating: 77%

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER

TGM STAR PLAYER

MicroProse ■ Atari ST ■ £29.99

Originally reviewed: TGM004.

This classic flight combat sim was originally *Project: Stealth Fighter* on the C64 but the *Project* suffix was replaced for its new improved release on the PC (TGM015). The plane simulated is actually named the F-117A, the infamous 'stealth' plane invisible to radar.

Stealth Fighter has already proved its worth in terms of gameplay and depth with the C64 and PC versions, so it was all down to how effectively flight would be depicted on ST. It's here and it's great. It has all the necessary speed and more besides — better than I hoped — and has enough action to convert non-flight sim enthusiasts. It's been a long wait for the conversions to the popular, games-oriented 16-bits but it's been well worth it. A classic sim that's superb value for money.

WL

Machine update: 96%

WORLD CUP SOCCER
Virgin Mastertronic ■ C64 ■
£9.99/£14.99
See Spectrum review.

The pitch is surprisingly small and although only comprised of markings it scrolls jerkily. Sprites are blocky, lanky and square, and badly animated. Views from behind the goal, switched to when the opposition attempt to score, are weak. Other than the goalkeeper and potential scorer, the pitch is empty and both goal and sprite duo are blocky and badly formed. The ball pays scant attention to momentum and sound is just an ear-piercing whistle.
WL
Machine rating: 40%

WORLD CUP SOCCER
Virgin/Mastertronic
■ Atari ST ■ £19.99
See Spectrum review.

A jerkily rotating football introduces the game. When teams are chosen, a simplistic squad picture's shown, shirts completely devoid of shading. Sprites are pleasant, if plain, but whichever team you choose they seem to be of oriental origin (ie they're yellow), including the ref whose portrait occasionally appears to accompany the game's only apparent sound effect, a whistle. Animation's good, if a little slow, as is the scrolling. The background for the behind the goal viewpoint (when someone attempts to score) is very grainy.
WL
Machine rating: 61%

WORLD CUP SOCCER
Virgin Mastertronic
■ Spectrum ■ £9.99

One of the biggest debates in the computer games biz at the moment isn't which is the best footie game on the market, oh no. It's who holds the official licence to this year's World Cup championship — judging from names and packaging, at least three software houses have. But Virgin are adamant it's them and who are we to disagree? (On second thoughts, don't answer that.) In their World Cup game, you can either play an exhibition match or go for the biggy and enter the Cup at the first qualifying round.

Strange. The sprites are strange blocky collections of pixels that, in an abstract way, represent footballers quite realistically, if you squint, put your head on one side, stand on one leg etc. Animation's quite good but on the slow side and a team's roughly coloured, causing lots of clash.



Sound is restricted to the occasional bleep.

The games market is literally swamped with football games, most of them very plain and ordinary indeed, others divided between very good and bloody awful. *World Cup Soccer* hits the middle ground but its unattractive visuals and surprising lack of options pulls it toward the bad.
WL
Machine rating: 60%

WORLD GAMES
Virgin/Mastertronic ■ Sega ■
£24.99

The multi-load computer versions of this Epyx multi-event game are so old that they were released before TGM's time. Four events from around the world can be practised or competed in by up to four players, starting with barrel jumping in Germany. The barrels are laid out on an ice rink and a bad landing is paid for by a chilly dip through the ice or a bruise on the bottom. In Canada, you're one of two lumberjacks in the log rolling event, where you have to attempt to make him fall off while retaining your own balance. South to America for bull-riding, where naturally you try to start on the bucking beast, while in Scotland you must toss a caber in as energetic a manner as possible (ahem!).

Graphics are of a very high standard, backgrounds colourful and packed with detail. Sprites are better still, very well drawn and animated — quite cartoon-like and with humourous touches when an event goes wrong.

To get the negative points over with, *World Games* is the worst of the famous *Games* series, other than the highly derivative *The Games: Summer Edition* and *Winter Edition*, and it originally had six events — Sega owners miss out on weightlifting and Sumo wrestling. Nevertheless, the events are fun and playable, particularly when competing against friends, and there are a friendly selection of options. Despite its (mere?) four events, Sega *World Game* is an unusual and value-for-money sporting product.
WL
Machine rating: 80%

TGM STAR PLAYER

HAMMER-FIST
Activision
■ Atari ST ■
£24.99
Originally reviewed: TGM029.

The ST version of *Hammerfist* has been well worth the wait. Virtually identical to its 16-bit brother, the ST game is just as absorbing with its brain bending puzzles and xenophobic mutated creatures. It takes a while to get into the game, but patience is well rewarded.
MC
Machine update: 90%



SIMON'S QUEST
Konami ■ NES ■ £39.95

Simon's Quest is the second Nintendo sequel reviewed this month. You play the eponymous Simon Belmont, the brave knight that vanquished the evil Count Dracula from *Castlevania*. But before the Count snuffed it he cursed you by turning you into a zombie. Only by collecting the five parts of the Count's body and burning them in his castle can your curse be lifted.

Yet another arcade RPG. Talk to a few people, trust some, blow some away, buy and sell a few items, get a bit of information — you know the sort of thing.

Like *Adventure of Link*, *Simon's Quest* may not have enough content to justify the price. Again the sprites are large, and similarly poor. There isn't even the interesting battery save system of *The Adventure of Link*. Approach with caution.
MC Machine rating: 55%

ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS

TGM STAR PLAYER

Tengen/Domark ■ Amiga ■ £19.99

Originally reviewed: TGM031.

A series of amusing schlock cartoon screens introduce and set the scene for the game, whose sprites are small, slim and detailed — except the chunky, 'Weetabix' models of robot, that is! Animation is first-rate and includes some brilliant touches, like when a player is caught on moving spikes and is dragged back and forth, or when someone is sucked up a glass tube. It's a shame it doesn't scroll properly (more graphics are hurriedly dragged on-screen when you reach the edge), but the relentless soundtrack matches the action perfectly.

WL

Machine update: 88%

SKATE OR DIE

Konami ■ NES ■ £24.95

Originally reviewed: TGM018.

A pounding tune kicks off the Nintendo version of *Skate or Die*, and this line of good tunes continues throughout each event. Graphics are on the whole bright, colourful and nicely animated, the only let down being the Joust (really naff). Buy or die?

MC

Machine update: 80%

ASSAULT CITY

Virgin Mastertronic ■ Master System ■ £29.99

Assault City contains the old clichéd scenario of a future where robots are rebelling. Joe, the toughest lad around, is our only hope.

The game is divided into two levels: training and battle. The battle is set over six levels and scrolls from left to right *Operation Wolf-style. Robots run, fly and wheel their way across the screen. Avoid the bullets and grab the power-ups to increase firepower. Each level ends with (surprise, surprise) a bad baddie.*

Assault City is initially quite playable, but what's new? The joypad/joystick response is sluggish, resulting in a frustrating, repetitive game. 30 quid? You must be joking.

MC

Machine update: 51%

LIVERPOOL

Grandslam ■ CPC ■ £9.99/£14.99



Not to be outdone by Manchester United and their Krisalis computer football game, the Merseysiders have two Kenny Dalglish games (one more still to come) and this, the officially licensed game of the whole team. Like most footie games these days, you can play a friendly game or enter a league. Leagues in progress can be saved out for later use.

Players are 'boxey' — square heads, square bodies, rectangular legs. Animation's quite good although footballers' legs look barely thick enough to support them. They move quite slowly and scrolling's juddery as well as slothful. Effects are simple kicks and thwacks but title music, *You'll Never Walk Alone*, is very bright and breezy, the best thing about *Liverpool*.

Another footie game, another dollar. *Liverpool* has nothing new or different to offer, and no fancy graphics. What's more, there's nothing about the game that says 'Liverpool' (apart from the title screen, that is!) so the licence is a waste of time and money, certainly with this version (I dare say 16-bit versions will be an improvement in that respect, with digitised pics). CPC owners should stick with Audiogenic's *Emlyn Hughes' International Soccer*.

WL

Machine rating: 62%

DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH

Enigma Variations ■ C64 ■ £9.99/£14.99

See Amiga review.

The Flash sprite is wearing very few clothes and looks like He-Man with a square haircut and several yellow bruises. Other sprites are as bad, animation's mediocre and it's flick-screen rather than scrolling. Stonework is shaded nicely but otherwise backgrounds lack detail. Sound effects are wimpy *SEUCK* rip-offs. Gameplay's altered by the lack of scrolling, different Fortress layout and pits to leap but it's still only an average budget game at full price.

WL

Machine rating: 36%

DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH

Enigma Variations ■ Amiga ■ £19.99

In between Phillip Schofield, Gordon the Gopher and the Singing Corner ('Swing your pants!'), BBC's Saturday morning programme, *Going Live!* presents the cartoon adventures of the Defenders of the Earth. The Defenders are Flash Gordon, dashing blond leader, Mandrake, the magician, Lother, the world's strongest man, the mysterious Phantom and the obligatory fluffy little mascot that gets on everyone's nerves — this one's called Zuffy (yehhk!).

In this game, as in their TV series, their enemy is the big, loud, green man with the spikey beard — Brian Blessed with food poisoning, er, Ming the Merciless. The evil Ming has kidnapped the Defenders' children and is holding them in his Fortress of Evil. Only Flash can sneak through the defences, blasting robots and soldiers and occasionally calling for help from his four Defender friends.

Parallax scrolling is fast and smooth but the difference in speed between the fore and background is ridiculous; the rooms can corridors of the Fortress must be incredibly large. Backgrounds are repetitive, short of colour and grainy in definition. Sprites are a bit better but animation's sub-standard. The best part of the game is the Flash sample preceding each game: 'What are you waiting for? Come on and give us a hand, young Defender!' In-game samples are high quality and title music's fun and lively.

Ho-hum. Yet another cartoon licence used on a very tired game format, Flash, Mandrake, Ming etc being chucked into a very ordinary zap-and-run arcade game, with a touch of exploration. This is the kind of simple game with simple graphics that budget labels are using for minor TV licences so Enigma are being brave by charging so much for *Defenders of the Earth*.

WL

Machine rating: 58%

DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH

Enigma Variations ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99

See Amiga review.

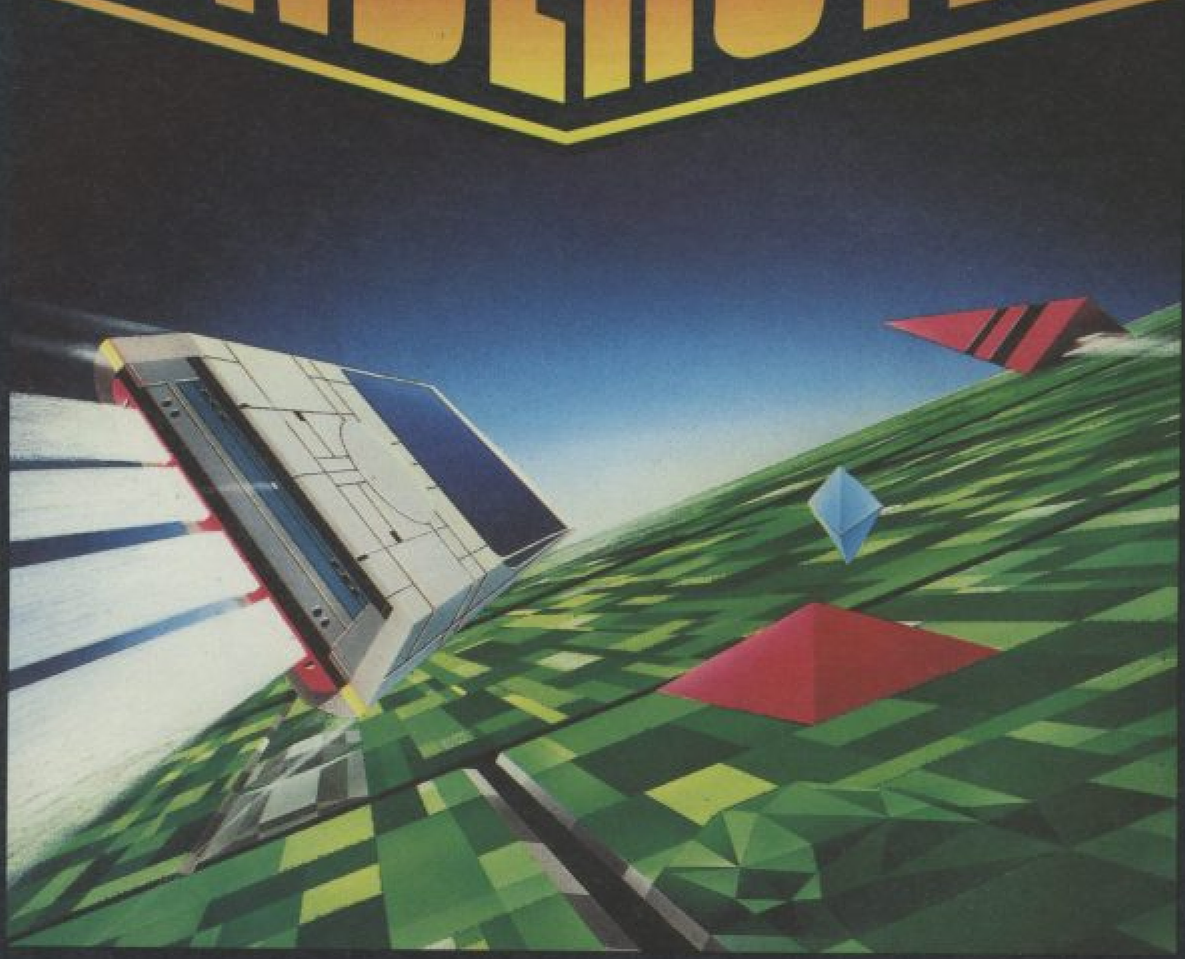
Although individual characters and areas are monochrome, different colours are used for them so there's a reasonable a spread of colour — but no scrolling. There's little detail in the characters and less still in some background features. Though there are few of them, sounds are effective and music's good (if wibbly wobbly).

WL

Machine rating: 38%



THUNDERSTRIKE



IBM PC VGA SCREEN SHOTS



IN JUST 200 years the Earth is controlled by the TV networks and defence industries. The ultimate TV phenomenon is coverage of the military olympics... and the ultimate event is *'Ground Defence'*. Gladiators man deadly craft, their mission to protect the communication tracks and ground installations. Their goal - and yours - is to be knighted *'Defender of the Ground'*.

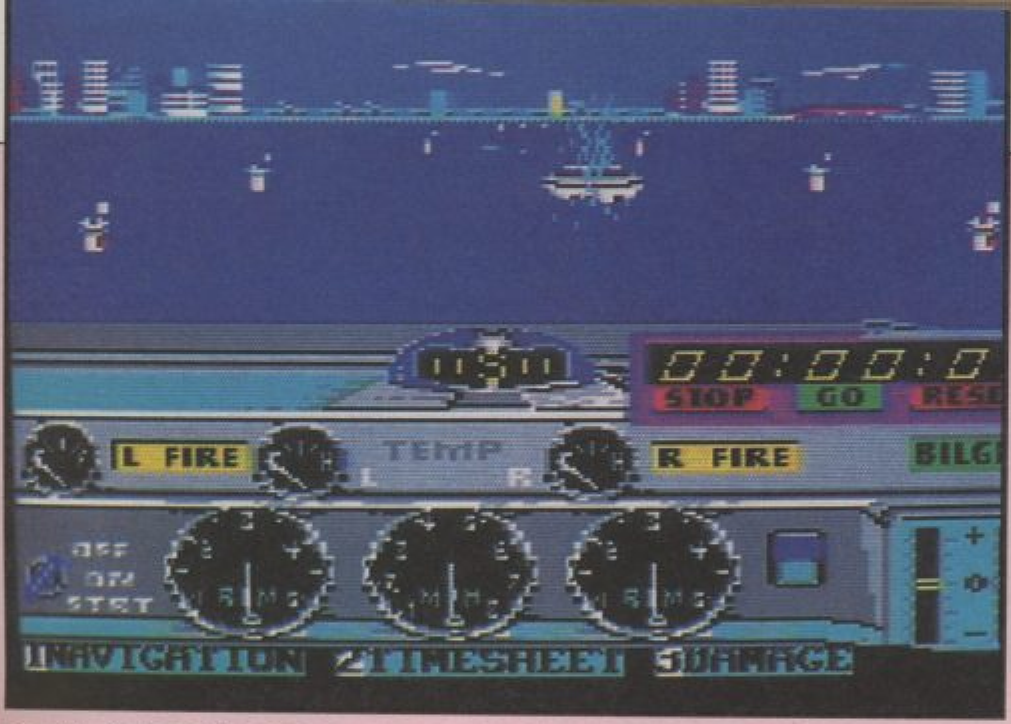
ThunderStrike is 3D arcade action, using solid polyhedrons and solid relief techniques to create a breathtaking contoured landscape. With super-smooth 3D scrolling the gladiator's craft hunts and attacks the enemy vessels in deadly low-flying combat. The action is tracked by a camera following close on the tail of the player's craft, whether flying along a trench or hugging the undulating contours of the ground.

- Spectacular graphics - fully light-source shaded solid 3D vectors (in 256 colours on VGA)
- Choose to pilot a variety of sleek Defender class fighters
- Heads-up display featuring radar displays and weapon indicators
- Various weapon pick-ups, shield drones and turbo-thrusters
- Watch the TV ratings go up as the action gets hotter!
- Available from the end of June 1990 for the Atari ST, Commodore Amiga (£24.99) and the IBM PC (EGA/VGA) (£29.99)

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MILLENNIUM



POWERBOAT USA

Accolade ■ C64 ■ £9.99 cass, £16.99 disk

Formula One racing, speedway, rallying, moto-cross... pah! Wimps play those sports! *Real* men don't mind getting their feet wet, they go powerboat racing. Now you can, too, aboard one of four boats and at San Francisco, Miami or on the Mississippi. Before racing, fuel and spare propellers and prop shafts are taken on board, the latter two for mid-race repairs.

The stills of the boats are quite good, if grainy in places, but in-game graphics are weak. Courses are marked out by vague lines of blobby buoys, which jerk and jump around as you approach them, and horizon graphics are basic and badly coloured. Sounds are simple.

Accolade aren't living up to their reputation with *Powerboat USA*. While it has plenty of options (though not as many as their *Blue Angels*), the actual game is no different from an average racer — whack up the throttle and dodge left and right. This wouldn't be a problem if the graphics and feel were good. But they aren't so it is.

WL

Machine rating: 56%

POWERBOAT USA

Accolade ■ IBM PC ■ £24.99

See C64 review.

PC *Powerboat* has an increased number of options but these are only to select graphics mode, speed and detail level. Boat selection and pits screens now having spinning boats in filled 3-D, like the boats and scenery/obstacles in the game itself. The graphics options mean speed, smoothness and detail can be coaxed out of any PC — though not necessarily all at once.

WL

Machine rating: 70%

THE CYCLES

Accolade ■ CPC ■ £9.99/£14.99

Originally reviewed: TGM026.

Graphics are quite blocky and the cycle's handlebars are boxed off in black, spoiling the 'on yer bike' viewpoint. Backgrounds are short on detail and opposing bikes jump in and out of view. However, road perspective's good (even if the stripes fail to give an illusion of movement) and playability's high, although steering is a touch too wild. The engine sound is irritating but with it turned down *The Cycles* is one of the better CPC racers.

WL

Machine update: 81%

THE CYCLES

Accolade ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99/£14.99

Originally reviewed: TGM026.

Like the Amstrad version, the bike graphic at the bottom of the screen is boxed off, which spoils the driving effect when near to either side of the track. Horizon graphics are fairly detailed and there's a colour split here — below it, green monochrome, above it, blue monochrome. Computer cycle definition and movement is amateurish but road perspective is good and the moving stripe trick gives a commendable feeling of movement. Sound is limited to an engine noise like a bee in a jam jar but sonic weaknesses don't stop *The Cycles* from being an excellent race game.

WL

Machine update: 84%

ITALY 1990

US Gold ■ Amiga ■ £24.99

This World Cup year has already dragged several football games out of the closet and as summer arrives will prompt the release of more. But at least US Gold can rest safe in the knowledge of being fully genned up on the subject, each copy of *Italy 1990* includes a copy of their *World Cup File-of-Facts*. The file includes information on the history of the World Cup, famous players, venues and the teams taking part.

Whether engaging in a friendly match or entering a group league in the World Cup itself, it's the teams that count and you can choose from the 24 teams using their skill, speed, aggression and strength ratings (out of five) as a guide. If playing in the Cup, you can also choose formation and which players participate in each match, judging them under the same four ratings.

As far as presentation graphics go, team/player selection screens are clearly laid out, the digital scoreboard is clean and professional but the TV presenter, although well defined, moves like a robot chewing gum. In game, the plain pitch scrolls with a mild shudder, but sprites are excellently drawn and animated realistically — movement when running in an upper-diagonal direction is nothing short of brilliant. Effects are just a few thwacks and music is a fun, summery piece.

Italy 1990 has no actual faults; it does nothing badly but does nothing particularly well and, other than the *File-of-Facts*, has nothing to put it above any other good football game. Playability is fine but won't be enough to stop *Kick Off 2* being tops.

WL

Machine rating: 74%



ITALY 1990

US Gold ■ Atari ST ■ £19.99

See Amiga review.

Port-across City. Graphics are as near to the Amiga's as makes no difference. Music isn't as an enjoyable experience with the ST's warbling and screeching sounds and effects are simple white noise (steam train-like, in places). Mildly above-average gameplay isn't going to win many fans.

WL

Machine rating: 74%

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CARRIER COMMAND
Rainbird ■ C64 ■
£14.99/£17.99
Originally reviewed: TGM007.

This was a 16-bit vector graphic strategy/simulation megagame, once upon a time. Then, it was a pretty damn good Spectrum game. Now... It's a plan view shoot-'em-up with a modicum of strategy. Control panels are clearly drawn, as are backgrounds, but they're plain and repetitive. Sprites are small and drab, sounds are few but functional.

WL
Machine update: 66%

FIRE AND BRIMSTONE
Firebird ■ Amiga ■ £24.99
Originally reviewed: TGM031.

Nasty Norse Hel is causing trouble for everyone so it's up to you as Thor, magic hammer and potions at the ready, to stop her evil ways from taking over. Very much like the ST, graphics are colourful, detailed and well shaded — the Amiga scoring over the Atari with slightly better colour — and sprites are cartoon-like and well animated. Some great dramatic music and sounds round it all off.

WL
Machine update: 84%

CYBERBALL
Tengen/Domark ■ Atari ST ■
£19.99
Originally reviewed: TGM030.

The lack of the hard-hitting Amiga title tune was no surprise, neither was the graphical similarity. The ST version of *Cyberball* contains the same colourful, tough nut robots and atmospheric sound effects. Again, grid iron aficionados will probably like this.

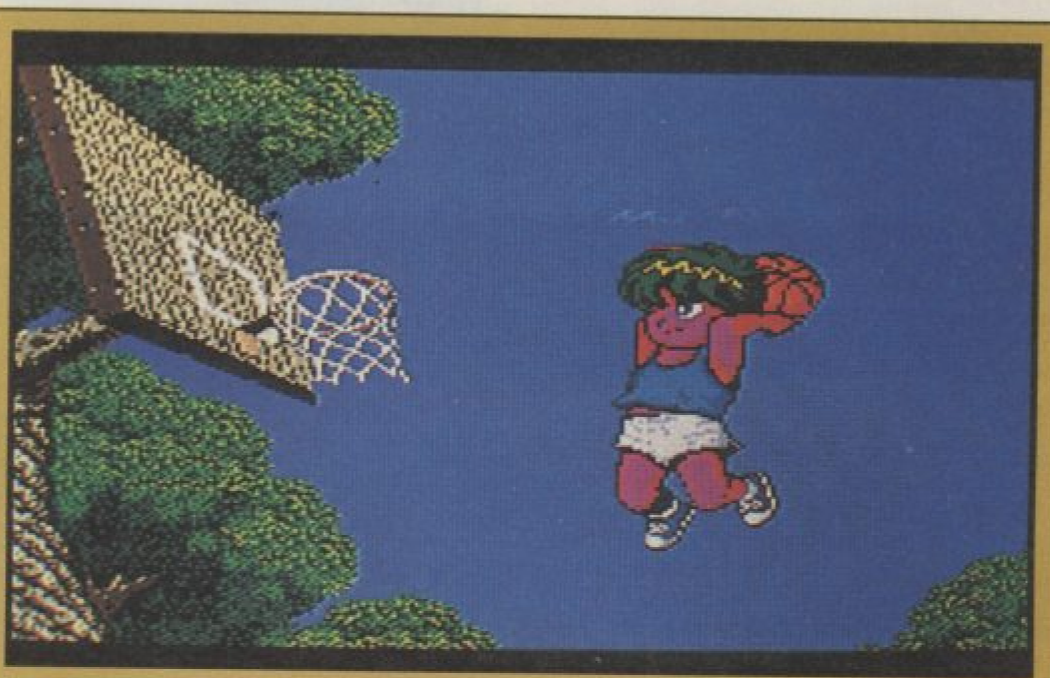
MC Machine update: 80%

CYBERBALL
Tengen/Domark
■ Spectrum ■ £9.99/£14.99
Originally reviewed: TGM030

Oh dear, this is disappointing. After the rather good Amiga version comes this naff Speccy conversion. Both the sprites and backdrops are mono, the characters look nothing like tough 20-foot-tall mean dude robots, and the movement (if you can call it that) is glitchy. Save your money.

MC
Machine update: 45%





BASKETBALL NIGHTMARE
Virgin Mastertronic ■ Sega ■
£24.99

You're such a mega basketball fan you even dream about the sport, eat, drink and sleep it. You can't resist a dribble and a bounce (way-hey!). You've become the captain of the Hometown High team and steered them to the finals of the All-American High School Championship. But now your obsession has come back to haunt you — literally. On the night before the big day, your basketball dreams become a nightmare.

It's only in a one player game where it's a nightmare, with six levels and pitches for the six supernatural teams: the Blue Wolfmen, River Turtles, Little Cyclopses, Blood-Suckers (vampires, not tax inspectors), Witches of Northwick (does Mr Nicholson know?) and the Tengun Terrors (blatant dig at Atari Games). In a two-player game, each person choose a team from eight nationalities.

This may be a nightmare but it uses the same cute little characters so prevalent in console games; it's more of a sweet dream than a terrible nightmare. What *is* terrible is the sprite flicker of the small but pleasantly formed basketballers. Backgrounds are dreary and although the close-ups of basket shots have impressively large characters, flicker strikes again.

Though there have been countless numbers of them, team games rarely generate any real sense of fun or involvement. *Basketball Nightmare* tries to boost its average playability with the old unusual scenario/feature/graphics ploy but the visuals are so plain that it just doesn't work.

WL
Machine rating: 61%

DIE HARD
Activision ■ C64 ■ £19.99
disk only
Originally reviewed: TGM026.

Mr Willis has gained a good few pounds (in weight as well as money) for this game. The porky character sprites look more like weebles than tough cop/terrorists. But despite this, *Die Hard* is a fairly playable arcade/adventure game that is worth a look.

MC
Machine update: 75%

MANCHESTER UNITED
Krisalis ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99
Originally reviewed: TGM030.

Mostly Monochrome, the perfect name for a Spectrum mag. Yes, Man Utd is one more game that fits that description. Option screen icons are monochrome with spots of colour here and there, but they're not animated. Definition's on the blocky, grainy side but playability's good.

WL
Machine update: 75%

BLUE ANGELS
Accolade ■ Amiga ■ £24.99
Originally reviewed: TGM028.

Amiga formation stunt flying has the same high presentation and clear layout as the PC original but lacks the interest and playability due to weak flight graphics. Screen update is quite slow, of variable jerkiness, and prevents a feeling of involvement. Strangely, sound is little improvement over the PC, just a few bleeps, a dull engine noise and 'Break!'. Only of major interest to Red Arrows freaks.

WL
Machine update: 78%

KENNY DALGLISH SOCCER MATCH
Impressions ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99

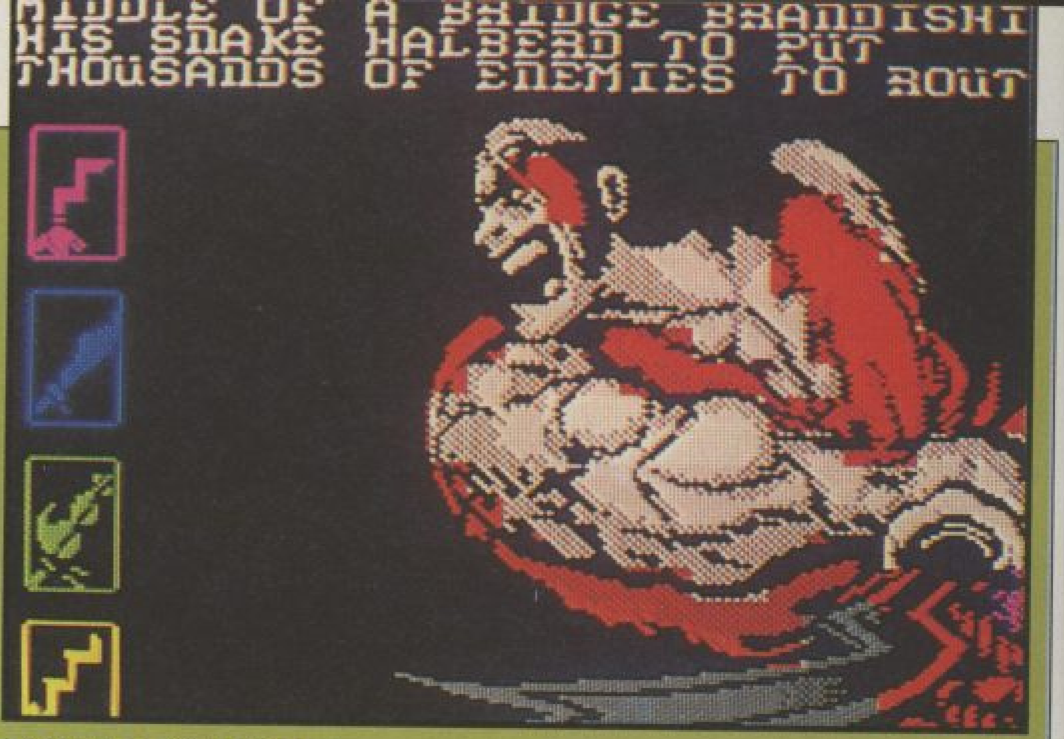
In TGM018, we reviewed *Kenny Dalglish Soccer **Manager***, on Impression's Cognito label. Now it's straight down to the match itself. Up to four players can compete in a mini-league of matches of ten, 20, 40 or 90 minutes duration, at normal or fast speed and, if playing against the computer, playing at one of nine skill levels.

The pitch is simply indicated by line markings yet scrolling, though fast, is still jerky. Sprites are small and old fashioned, with curious fat bellies and, apart from their eyes, completely black heads. Although their movement is fine, apart from non-controlled players dashing back and forth like madmen, the ball isn't, ignoring laws of momentum and categorically refusing to bounce. Effects are simple but the music's not bad.

Apart from the *Kick Off*-style free-running ball (ie it doesn't stick magically to players' feet), *Kenny Dalglish Soccer Match* is a plain and old fashioned game, whose look is more basic than the original *Match Day*. With it being a World Cup year, it's best to look at the other football games flooding the market before parting with your cash.

WL
Machine rating: 60%





DYNASTY WARS
US Gold ■ C64 ■ £9.99/£14.99
Originally reviewed: TGM031.

This version is a bit more colourful than the Spectrum offering, but the sprites are just as difficult to spot. Maybe Tiertex should give up programming and work for the army, they are wonderful with camoflage.

MC
Machine update: 45%

DYNASTY WARS
US Gold ■ Amiga ■ £24.99
Originally reviewed: TGM031.

Old Chinese proverb say game with juddery scrolling and wooden-looking sprites is bruddy rubbish. Amiga *Dynasty Wars* is here. Graphically the game is quite good, but the in-game tune grates on the old ears after about ten seconds. And I agree with Warren, the geezer at the end of the game looks uncannily like Brian Blessed.

MC
Machine update: 76%

DYNASTY WARS
US Gold ■ Spectrum ■ £9.99/£14.99
Originally reviewed: TGM031.

The intro screen is the best part of the Speccy game, when the 'action' starts things go rapidly downhill. The main problem is the colour (or rather lack of), *everything* is monochromatic. This makes even the sharpest-eyed person wonder where the sprites have gone, and that backward walking horse is still there.

MC
Machine rating: 50%

ZELDA II - THE ADVENTURE OF LINK
Nintendo ■ NES ■ £39.95

In the last installment of the Zelda quest, Link rescued Princess Zelda from the clutches of the evil Ganon and ended his reign of terror.

But, somehow, Ganon's surviving minions have discovered that if they pour Link's blood on their master's grave, he will come back to life. So they're after Link's skin (and blood) again. Unaware of this, Link has problems of his own. He is puzzled by a strange crown-shaped mark that has appeared on his hand.



He seeks the advice of Impa, Princess Zelda's nursemaid, who takes him to a locked room. Within is a beautiful princess, non other than the original Zelda (yeah, Zelda's a popular name in these parts) — you know, the one condemned to sleep for eternity. Eternal dormancy, that is, until someone can find the Triforce to restore her life. The Triforce consists of three parts: power, wisdom and courage. The first two parts are held in the Land of Hyrule, the third part, courage, is hidden far away. Impa tells Link that the strange mark means he is designated to find the third part of the Triforce.

So off you go, magic sword in hand, magic shield on arm and six magic crystals in yer pants. With these crystals he can enter six palaces, defeat the guardians and place the crystals in the foreheads of each statue he finds.

The Adventure Of Link is certainly immense, a cartographer's paradise in fact. Sprites, too, are large, but badly defined for their size. A novel addition is a battery pack that allows you to save a game position and thus return later. At forty quid it could, just, have enough content to justify the price. Check out the genre first.

MC
Machine rating: 65%

CASTLE

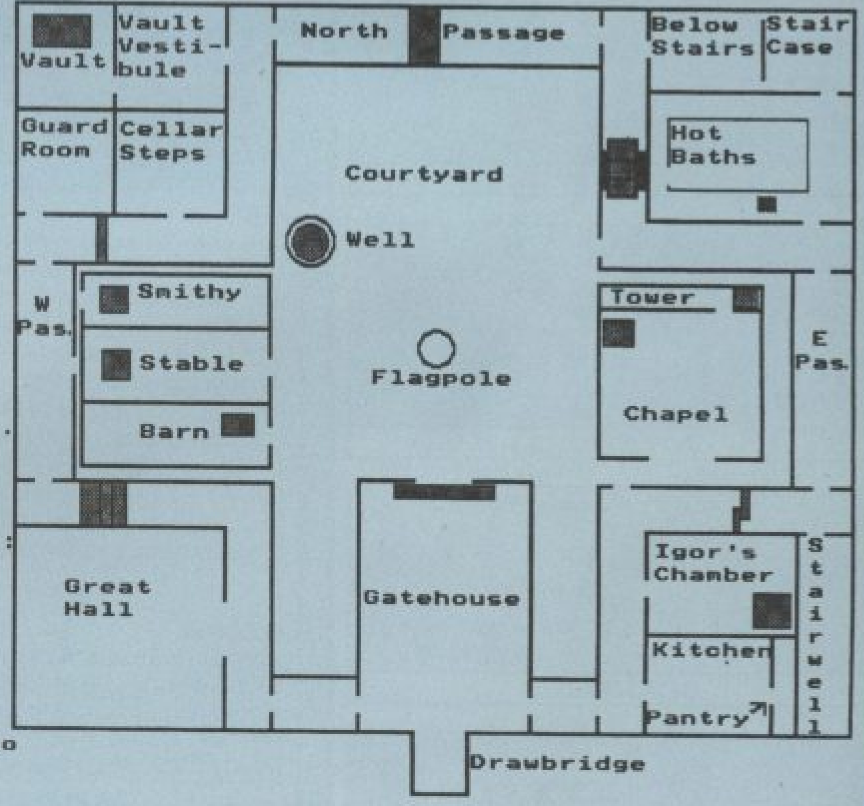


Continuing TGM's series of survival guides this month sees the 16-bit versions of Domark's excellent Castle Master under the TGM microscope. Thanks to Nik Wilde of adventure fanzine Inter-Action for the tips and maps.



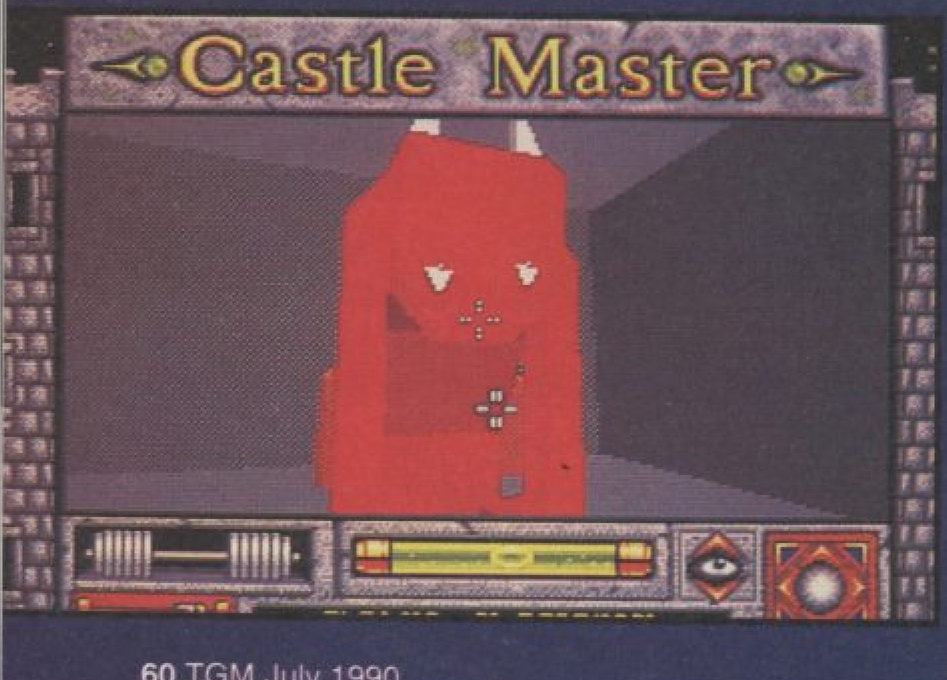
Level I

Key Locations:
The well
Horse in stable
Chapel roof
Wizard's hut
Igor's chamber
Kitchen
Barn
Vault and vestibule
To enter castle:
Throw rock at drawbridge button, stand on bridge and then throw another rock. This leaves you inside the castle with the bridge closed.
Catacomb entrances:
Rug in Wiz's hut
Well
Chapel pulpit
Drain baths
Cellar steps
Under the rock outside the castle (N.B. you must be at full strength to move the rock).



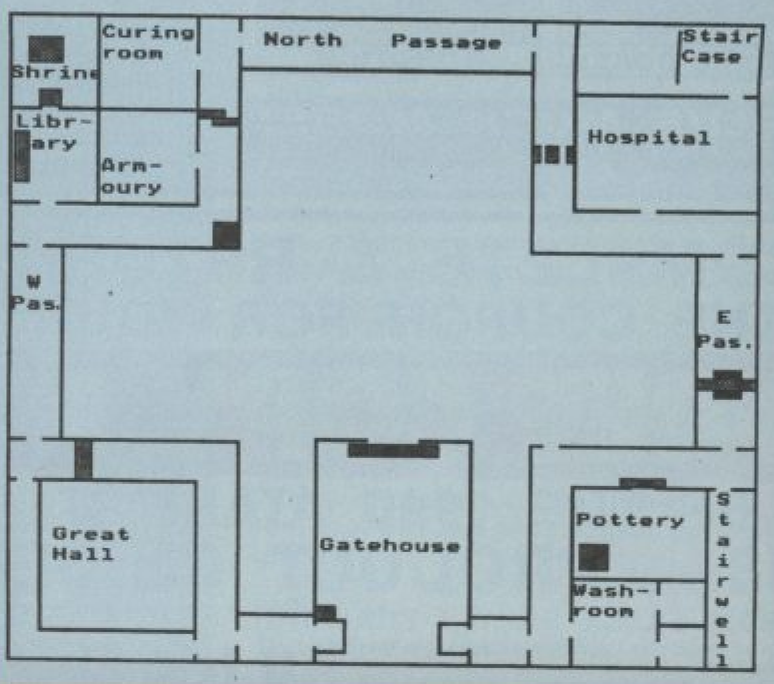
Catacombs

Spirits dwell in caverns and caverns feature roof trapdoors. Push the log to cross the hole. All caverns contain pentacles. Caverns can only be accessed from above. Don't drink too much in the wine cellar. Don't fall down the hole. Click repeatedly on the lot in the cellar corridor.



Level II

Click on a book in the library and an entrance to the shrine will be revealed. Don't fiddle with the kiln in the pottery. There's a pentacle in the Gatehouse. You need to be strong the pottery door. There's a key on the nugget in the shrine.

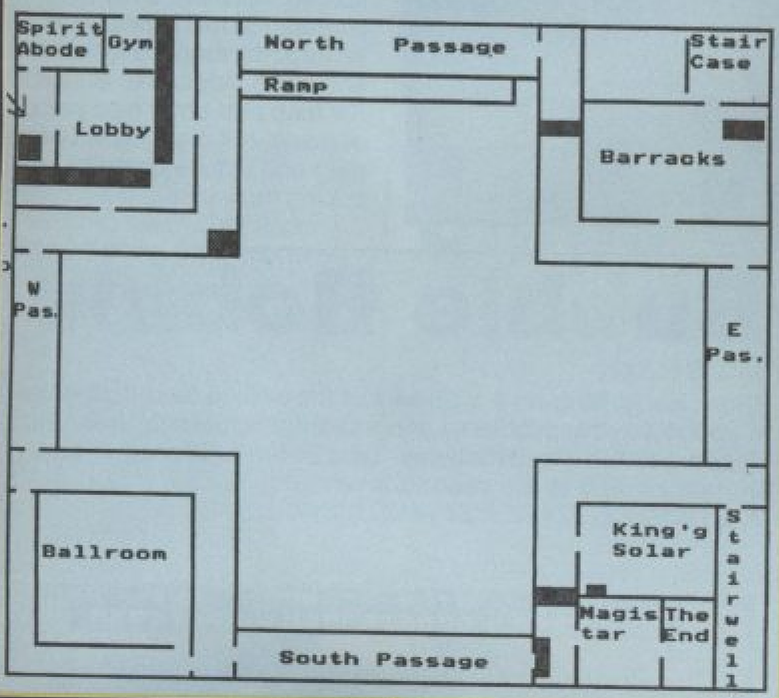




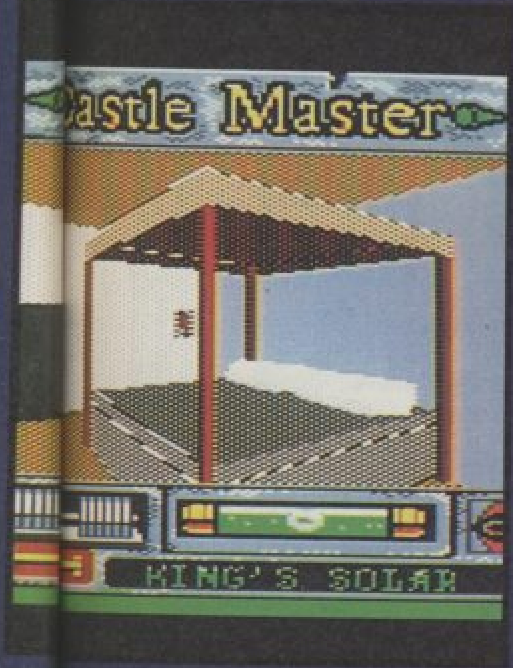
MASTER

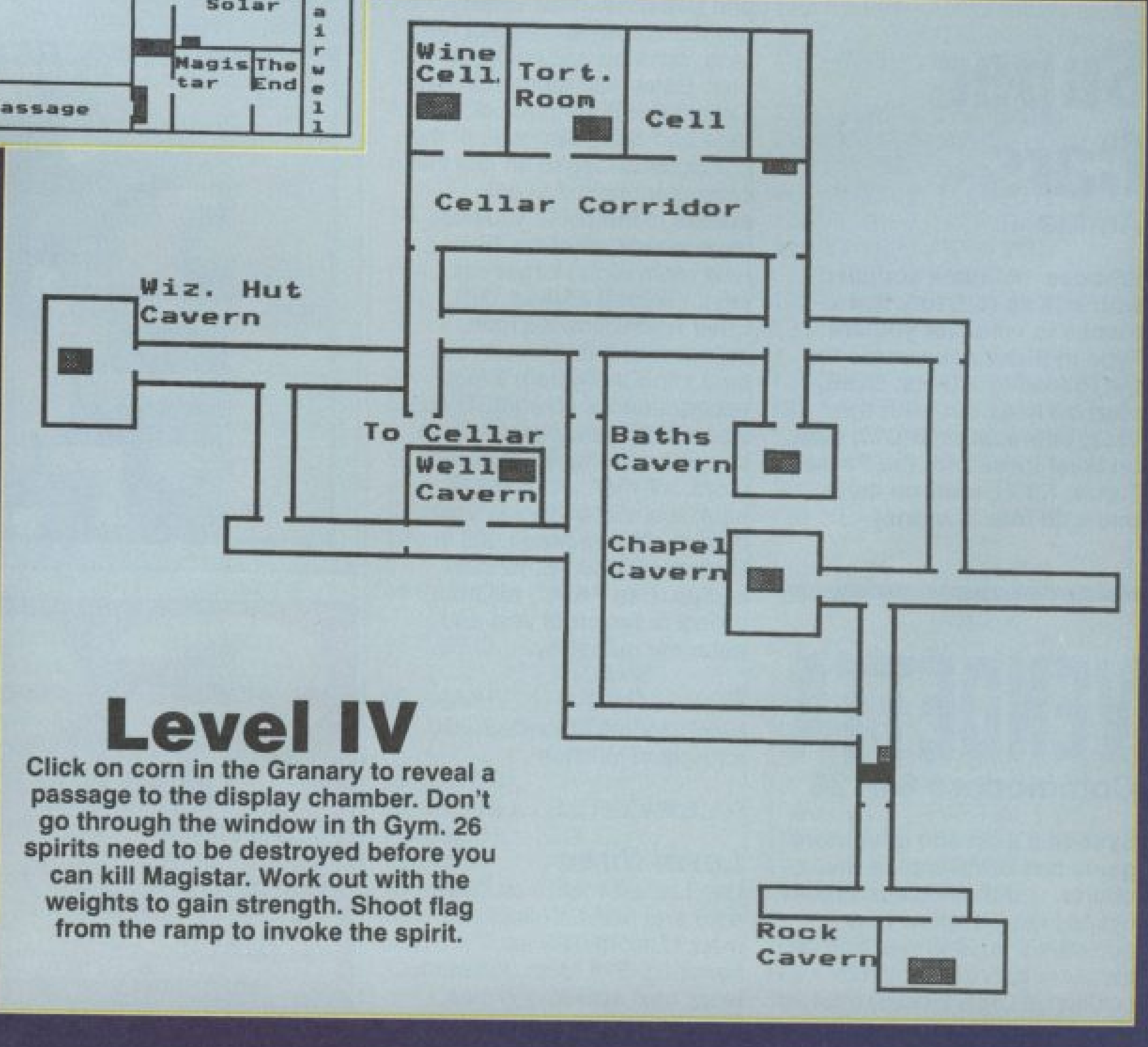
Level III

There's a pentacle in the junk room. To find a lot of treasure go to the display room. There's a strength potion in the Inn. Don't drink from the green bottle in the Carpenter's. Shoot at the Dragon's eyes, horns and teeth.









Level IV

Click on corn in the Granary to reveal a passage to the display chamber. Don't go through the window in th Gym. 26 spirits need to be destroyed before you can kill Magistar. Work out with the weights to gain strength. Shoot flag from the ramp to invoke the spirit.

NB: Grey areas on all levels indicate objects on interest

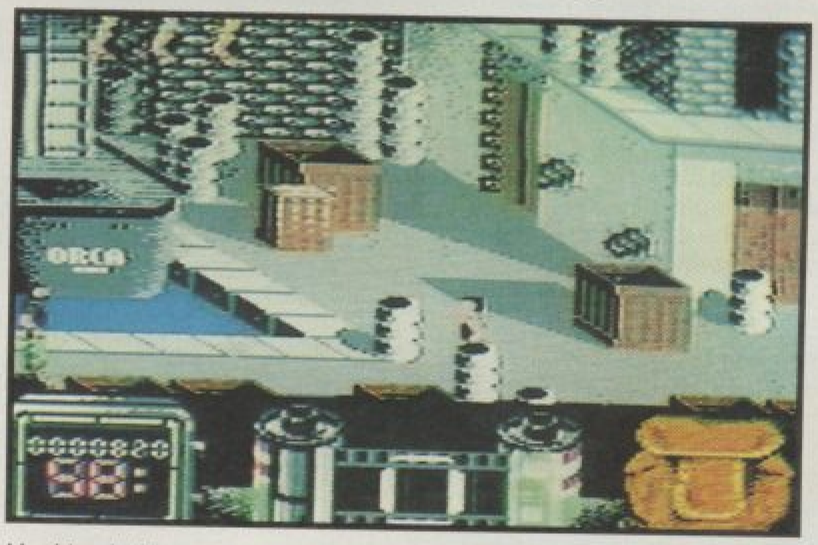
TGM TRICKS 'N' CHEATS

No game is safe from the prying playing skills of TGM readers. This month Robin Candy rummages through the post bag looking for birthday cards and comes up with the goods on Rainbow Islands, The Castlevania Adventure and Chip's Challenge (though he would of preferred the birthday cards).

Super Cars
Amiga

Whoops, no name supplied with this tip (tut, tut). But thanks to whoever you are. Type in these passwords for the following effects: ODIE, start on level two with the Vaug interceptor; BIG C, start on level three with the Parsec Turbo; RICH, start on level one with lots of money.

VENDETTA
Commodore 64/128



System 3's arcade adventure game has done well in the charts, and the endless stream of tips I receive show how addictive it is. However, first off the mark with the complete solution is Chris Holden from Hockley in Essex.

Level one

Use knife, kill man. Collect wire cutters then kick down door and enter room. Kill man. Collect grenades. Collect AK-47 and ammo. Exit room. Use AK-47. Kill man. Enter next screen. Kill man. Enter next screen. Kill man climb ladder and kick down door. Enter room. Kill man and collect red tape, car map and computer disk. Enter next room. Kill man. Collect computer manual, blue tape and computer code (if the computer is logged off use the computer manual to gain access to the code. you now have weapon system. Enter next room (don't forget car key). Kill man. Collect Uzi. Enter next room. Kill man, collect ammo and insert red tape into TV (System 3 logo appears on TV screen). Then insert blue tape (picture of the doctor's daughter). Enter last room. Kill man, collect necklace, exit all rooms until outside. Use grenade. Kill man. Descend ladder. Enter next screen. Use AK-47. Kill man, collect bullet-proof vest and enter car using key.

Level two

Key: L for left at junction and R for right at junction.

R,L,L,R,L,L,R,L,R,L,L,R,L,R,L,L

Level three

Use Uzi. kill man, kick down door and enter. Collect car map, ransom note and handbag. Exit room. Kill man, enter next screen. Kill man, don't enter room. Enter next screen. Kill man and enter screen. Kill man and enter screen. Kill man, climb ladder, collect ammo. Enter next screen. Kill man, kick down door and enter room. Kill man and collect ammo. Exit room. Kill man, enter next screen. Kill man and enter bomb shelter. Kill man, collect shoe, exit bomb shelter. Kill man and enter next screen. Climb into car.

Level four

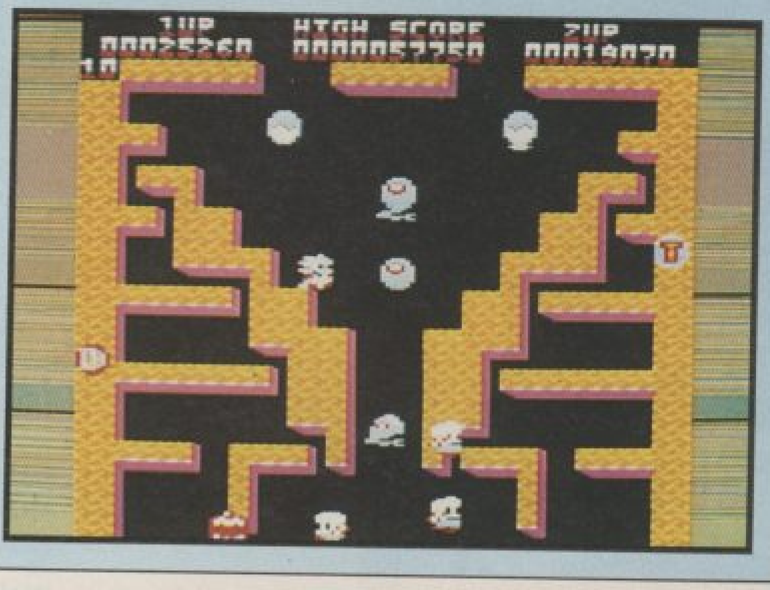
R,L,L,R,L,L,L,R,L,L,L.

Level five

Use AK-47. Kill man, kick down door and enter room. Kill man, collect bullet-proof vest and disguise. Exit room. Kill man and enter aircraft hangar. Kill man, enter next screen. Kill man, collect ammo, enter next screen. Kill man, enter next screen. Kill man, enter next screen. Kill man, collect ammo and climb ladder into aircraft. Kill man and enter next section of plane. Kill man, collect car map and diffuse bomb by cutting the wires in the following

Bubble Bobble
Amstrad

Okay, it's getting on a bit now but it's still an excellent game. If you're having problems progressing, try this tip from Ajit Tacouri of Tooting Broadway. Type in the following to gain instant access to the second level: ZZZ133VZZZZZZ4ZZZ1Z4V44ZZIY24V32.



£50 SOFTWARE VOUCHER!

Want to earn yourself some free games and a TGM T-shirt? Well it's easy. Just send in your tips, maps (we can only accept maps drawn in pen and ink) and cheats and the sender of what we judge to be the best set of tips etc will get the goodies. Send all your information to: NEWSFIELD, ROBIN CANDY'S TRICKS 'N' CHEATS, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1JW.

order: middle, left, right.

Level six
R,L,R,R,R,L,R,R,L,L,R.

Level seven
Use uzi, kill man, enter next screen. Kill man, enter next screen. Kill man, enter next screen. Kill man, enter next screen. Kill man, turn around and head back towards the stone statue where the doctor will be lying. Collect briefcase and you've completed the game.

After the War
Atari ST, Amiga

J Walkelam from Llangynidr send the code for part two: **101069.**

Out Run
Atari ST

Another crusty game, but Jon Marsh from Manchester wrote in to ask if I knew any cheats, so here goes.

Type in **STARION** on the the title screen. Start the game as normal and press **S** to skip a level or **T** for ten seconds of extra time.





Dyter 07
Atari ST, Amiga

Our old friend Tarquin Fistram from Guildford writes on this heli shoot-'em-up. When the loading screen appears (the one with the helicopter on it) type **GGIB**. The computer should bleep to show that the cheat mode is activated. Now start the game as normal. When you're at base press **W** for extra weapons. Press **S** any time in the game for extra shields and press **L** when the level has finished to skip a level.

Chips Challenge
Atari Lynx

Thanks to Kevin Learwood from Reading, getting to those tricky levels on this game is no longer a problem.

Level	*Code*	*Title*
1	BDHP	LESSON 1
2	JXMJ	LESSON 2
3	ECBQ	LESSON 3
4	YMCJ	LESSON 4
5	TQKB	LESSON 5
6	WNLP	LESSON 6
7	FXQO	LESSON 7
8	NHAG	LESSON 8
9	KCRE	NUTS AND BOLTS
10	VUWS	BRUSHFIRE
11	CNPE	TRINITY
12	WVHI	HUNT
13	OCKS	SOUTHPOLE
14	BTDY	TELEBLOCK
15	COZQ	ELEMENTARY
16	SKKK	CELLBLOCKED
17	AJMQ	NICE DAY
18	HMJL	CASTLE MOAT
19	MRHR	DIGGER
20	KGFP	TOSSED SALAD
21	UGRW	ICEBERG
22	WZIN	FORCED ENTRY
23	HUVE	BLOBNET
24	UNIZ	OORTO GELD
25	PQGV	BLINK
26	YVYJ	CHCHCHIPS
27	IGGZ	GO WITH THE FLOW
28	UJDD	PING PONG
29	QGOL	ARCTICFLOW
30	BQZP	MISHMESH
31	RYMS	KNOT
32	PEFS	SCAVENGER HUNT
33	BQSN	ON THE ROCKS
34	NQFI	CYPHER
35	VDTM	LEMMINGS
36	NXIS	LADDER
37	VQNK	SEEING STARS
38	BIFA	SAMPLER
39	ICXY	GLUT
40	YWFH	FLOOR GASBORG
41	GKWD	I.C. YOU
42	LMFU	BEWARE OF BUG
43	UJDP	LOCK BLOCK
44	TXHL	REFRACTION
45	OVPZ	MONSTER LAB
46	HDQJ	THREE DOORS
47	LXPP	PIER SEVEN
48	JYSF	MUGGER SQUARE
49	PPXI	PROBLEMS
50	QBDH	DIGDIRT
51	IGGJ	I SLIDE
52	PPHT	THE LAST LAUGH
53	CGNX	TRAFFIC COP
54	ZMGC	GRAIL
55	SJES	POTPOURRI
56	FCJE	DEEPFREEZE
57	UBXU	STRANGE MAZE
58	YBLT	LOOP AROUND
59	BLDM	HIDDEN DANGER
60	ZYVI	SCOUNDREL
61	RMOW	RINK
62	TIGW	SLO MO
63	GOHX	BLOCK FACTORY
64	IJPQ	SPOOKS
65	UPUN	AMSTERDAM
66	ZIKZ	VICTIM
67	GGJA	CHIPMINE
68	RTDI	EENY MINY MOE
69	NLLY	BOUNCE CITY
70	GCCG	NIGHTMARE
71	LAJM	CORRIDOR
72	EKFT	REVERSE ALLEY
73	QCCR	MORTEN
74	MKNH	PLAYTIME
75	MJDV	STEAM
76	NMRH	FLOUR PLEX
77	FHIC	INVINCIBLE CHAMPION
78	GRMO	FORCE SQUARE
79	JINU	DRAWN AND QUARTERED
80	EVUG	VANISHING ACT
81	SCWF	WRITERS BLOCK
82	LLIO	SOCIALIST ACTION
83	OVPJ	UP THE BLOCK
84	UVEO	WARS
85	LEBX	TELE NET
86	FLHH	SUICIDE
87	YJYS	CITYBLOCK
88	WZYV	SPIRALS
89	VCZO	BLOCK BUSTER
90	OLLM	PLAYHOUSE
91	JPQG	JUMPING SWARM
92	DTMI	VORTEX
93	REKF	ROADSIGN
94	EWCS	NOW YOU SEE IT
95	BIFQ	FOUR SQUARE
96	WVHY	PARANOIA
97	IOCS	METASTABLE NO CHAOS
98	TKWD	SHRINKING
99	XUVU	CATACOMBS
100	QJXR	COLONY
101	RPIR	APARTMENT
102	VDDU	ICE HOUSE
103	PTAC	MEMORY
104	KWNL	JAILER
105	YNEG	SHORT CIRCUIT
106	NXYB	KABLAM
107	ECRE	BALLS O FIRE
108	LIOC	BLOCKOUT
109	KZQR	TORTURE CHAMBER
110	XBAO	CHILLER
111	KRQJ	TIMELAPSE
112	NJLA	FORTUNE FAVOURS THE
113	PTAS	OPEN QUESTION
114	JWNL	DECEPTION
115	EGRW	OVERSEA DELIVERY
116	HXMF	BLOCK BUSTER II
117	FPZT	THE MARSH
118	OSCW	MISS DIRECTION
119	PHTY	SLIDE STEP
120	FLXP	NIGHTMARE
121	BPYS	PERFECT MATCH
122	SJUM	TOTALLY FAIR
123	YKSE	THE PRISONER
124	TASX	FIRETRAP
125	MYRT	MIXED NUTS
126	QRKD	BLOCK N ROLL
127	JMWZ	SKELZIE
128	FTLA	ALL FULL
129	HEAN	LOBSTER TRAP
130	XHIZ	ICE CURE
131	FIRD	TOTALLY UNFAIR
132	ZYFA	MIX UP
133	TIGG	BLOB DANCE
134	XPPH	PAIN
135	LYWO	TRUST ME
136	LUZL	DOUBLEMAZE
137	HPPX	GOLDKEY
138	LUJT	PARTIAL POST
139	VLHH	YORKHOUSE
140	SJUK	ICEDEATH
141	MCJE	UNDER GROUND
142	UCRY	PENTAGRAM
143	OKOR	STRIPES?
144	GVXQ	FIREFLIES

Rainbow Islands

All formats

Matthew Jones from Swansea has already cracked this game. Here are some of his findings along with tips from Graftgold, the programming team behind this great conversion.



General tips

■ Try to kill creatures as soon as possible, leave them and they get nasty.

■ Extra rainbow power is a must, so collect all the red potion bottles.

■ Quickly get up islands (but don't get careless). When the 'Hurry' message appears don't panic, but try to speed things up. When the water appears you'll have to get motoring.

■ To turn creatures into gems you either need to trap them under a rainbow and then break it or make a rainbow directly beneath them and break it.

■ At the end of each sub level go off the top of the bonus screen and your score will shoot up.

Objects

There are two types of object. One type rewards you with bonus points while the other equips you with weapons and defence shields. Many of them will only be revealed when you've collected large quantities of a particular object.

Point Bonuses

Gems — collect all of them and you will be rewarded with an extra life. But if you collect them all in sequence, a secret room will be revealed, containing a rather useful object (the room only appears on the 16-bit versions, in the 8-bit versions the object just appears where the last gem was).

Wand — turns broken rainbows into bonus points (only on the Amiga).

Red kettle — collect this and you will be rewarded with a shower of money.

Yellow kettle — hidden bonuses are revealed as small gold bags.

Small rings — reward you with points for either walking, jumping or breaking rainbows.

Necklace — gives all gems.

Defence and weapon bonuses

Shoes — allow you to walk faster.

Red potion — one extra rainbow power point (maximum of three).

Yellow potion — rainbows travel faster.

The following only last for a short while.

Cup — destroys all baddies onscreen.

Cross — issues you with killer lightning bolts.

Leaf — when collected a magic fairy will circle around you killing anything that it comes into contact with.

Book — rewards you with wings, these can be used by jumping quickly.

Cloak — makes you invincible.

Clock — freezes the nasties.

Large rings — there are three types. (1) Whenever you jump stars radiate from you (these kill all baddies). (2) Whenever you break a rainbow stars radiate from one end of the broken rainbow. (3) Causes a shower of stars down the screen.

Small rainbow — allows you to collect up to four rainbow power points.

The levels

Insect Island (levels 1-4)

Pretty easy. Kill all the insects when they appear. On level four watch out for ladybirds. Don't go above them as they fly up and kill you. There's no rush on this island so take your time and collect the bonuses.

Big spider

Run to one side of the spider and throw out a few rainbows. Wait until it drops and break the rainbows. Run in the opposite direction to the way that the spider bounces, turn and fire some more rainbows and break these when the spider comes back your way. Repeat this until it's dead.

Combat Island (levels 5-8)

Watch out for the bomb-dropping helicopters. Destroy the tanks before trying to progress past them and shoot the cannons before they can release their homing missiles.

Boss helicopter

As with the big spider this involves building a web of rainbows. When the helicopter comes down break the rainbows and climb up the screen. Wait for the helicopter to come up for you then drop down and repeat the process.

Monster Islands (levels 9-12)

The bats are nasty but they get worse if they turn into vampires, so kill them as soon as possible. If a number of them are following you then drop down onto a lower platform and wait for a chance to get the lot of them. Once again, get rid of monsters that shoot across your path before passing them.

Big Dracula

You really need a maximum rainbow power to beat this guy, he's one of the toughest meanies in the game. Get a few hits in before he starts throwing bats at you, then it's every man for himself. You may need to leap over Dracula to give yourself some breathing space but make sure that you leave a few rainbows around to defend yourself from the slave bats.

Toy Island (levels 13-16)

A tough section. Try not to fall down at all. Destroy the bouncing balls straight away, otherwise they speed up and home in. You've got to be quick on level 16 as time is tight.

Big clown

Don't worry too much about the small clowns, just concentrate on hitting the big clown. You can use the platforms to jump around, though it's probably best to stay on the floor.

Doh's Island (levels 17-20)

Don't fall down anywhere. New creatures always appear and usually they'll kill you. The filled diamond shapes can move through platforms so keep out of their way, but fire at them whenever you get the chance. The time limit on level 19 is strict so progress as fast as you can. If you die take advantage of the temporary invulnerability and get as far up the island as you can.

Big Doh

Similar to the big clown. Wait directly beneath Doh, and as he fires walk slowly to the side. After six shots you can jump up towards him and fire off some rainbows, but you've got to be quick as he reloads quickly.

Robot Island (levels 21-24)

This island is tough, kill everything in your present screen before progressing to the next. To kill the bouncing screws build a rainbow, wait until they're just above it then break it. The knight's heads have to be killed quickly before they speed up. If you can't kill them straight away make a protective rainbow between you and them.

Robot Head

Defeating this one is a matter of jumping between the platforms and the ground. Whenever the robot head moves towards you jump up or down (depending on where you are). Keep firing and breaking rainbows and he'll be dead in no time.

Dragon Island (levels 25-28)

You need maximum rainbow power to complete this level so get collecting those red potion bottles. Move up the level slowly and kill most of the dragons. The large flying dragons can fly through the platforms so dispose of them immediately. On level 26, when you appear on a new screen, move left and fire to the right otherwise you will be killed by a 'drip'. Hurry on level 27; time is tight.

Flying dragon

The last meanie in the game and one which Graftgold feel you should face by yourselves. Quick hint: it's a good idea to move between the very top and bottom of the screen!

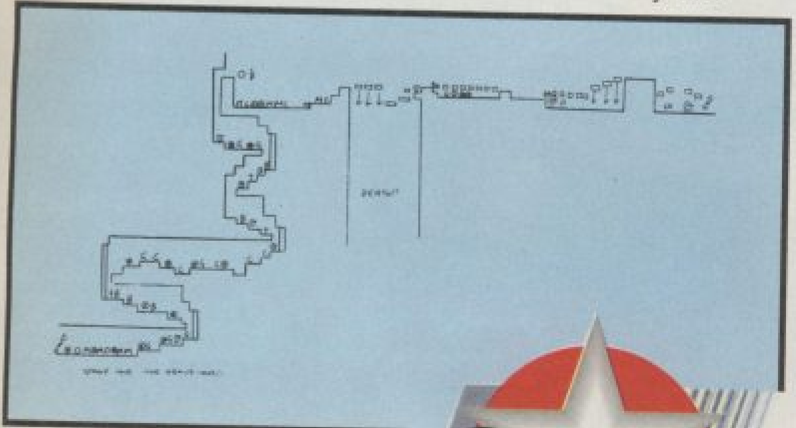


The Castlevania Adventure

Nintendo Game Boy

This month's Star Tips award goes to Philip Baxter from Ponteland for his series of maps and hints on various Game Boy games. Due to lack of space we can't print all his tips in one go. This month features the solution to The Castlevania Adventure while next month we'll show you how to crack Master Karateka.

Level 1

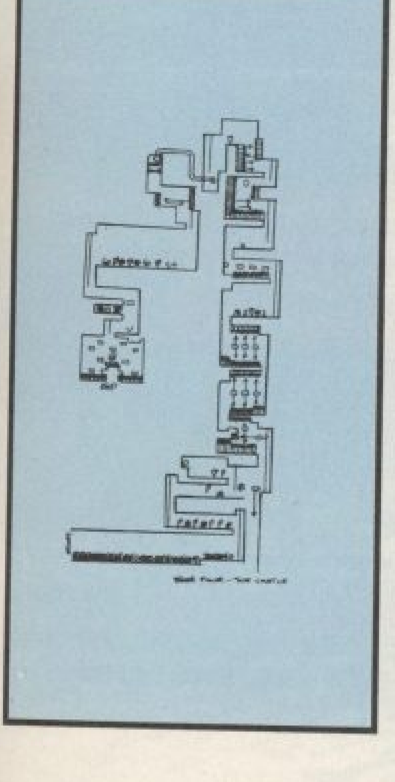


The monsters don't pose much of a threat on this level. To reach the 1UP shown on the map you must have a powered up whip. You can then shoot the torch with the fireball and the 1UP will fall to the ground. Getting past the stepping stones can be a bit tricky. It's best to keep moving but watch out for the bat. Always stop on the first stone and jump/whip the bat.

You can only kill Gobanz if you have the powered up whip, fireballs just bounce off him. Keep whipping and don't worry if he hits you once or twice: he's slow, you're fast.

Level 2

The biggest problem on this level is Punaguchi. Watch the flight pattern of the fireball he lobs at you. If it's high jump and whip it, if it's low just remain still and whip it. The 1UP on this level is the toughest to get. Run and jump across all three moving platforms, but resist the temptation to use your whip whilst you are in the air.



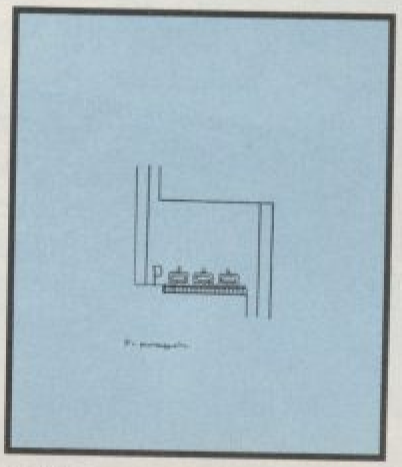
Level 3

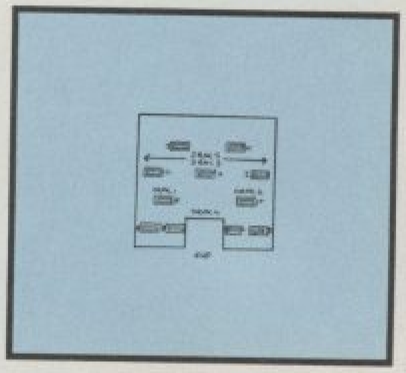
To get the 1UP on this level, wait for the ceiling to fall then hit the tower four times, making sure that the last hit is very late. Quickly run back to the torch. Jump and whip it to collect the 1UP.

Once you reach the pursuing wall, don't rush and get yourself killed, especially when jumping across the moving platforms. Watch out for the she-worms. If you hit one with a normal whip it will curl up and rocket towards you. When you reach the devil-bat, jump onto the highest platform on the right and wait. When the devil-bat rests on the left platform zap him with fireballs. Then, when he flies over you, whip him to death. If you don't have the fireballs you're in severe trouble.

Level 4

You've got a lot of time to complete this level so don't rush things. Be on the look out when walking past the suits of armour, not all of them are as immobile as they may at first seem. Watch out for the black suits of armour. Try not to lose any of your power-ups as you're unlikely to complete the game without them.

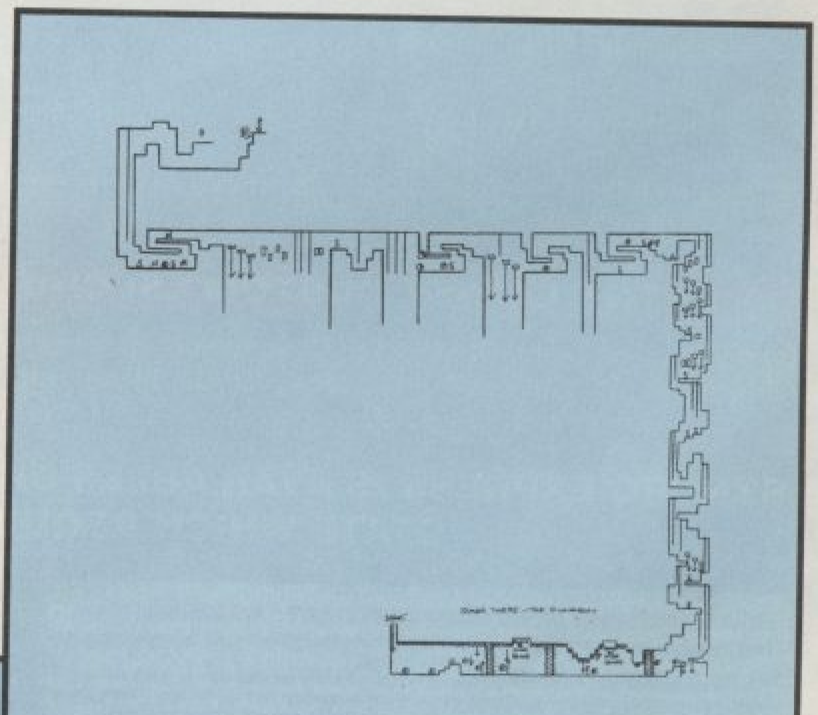


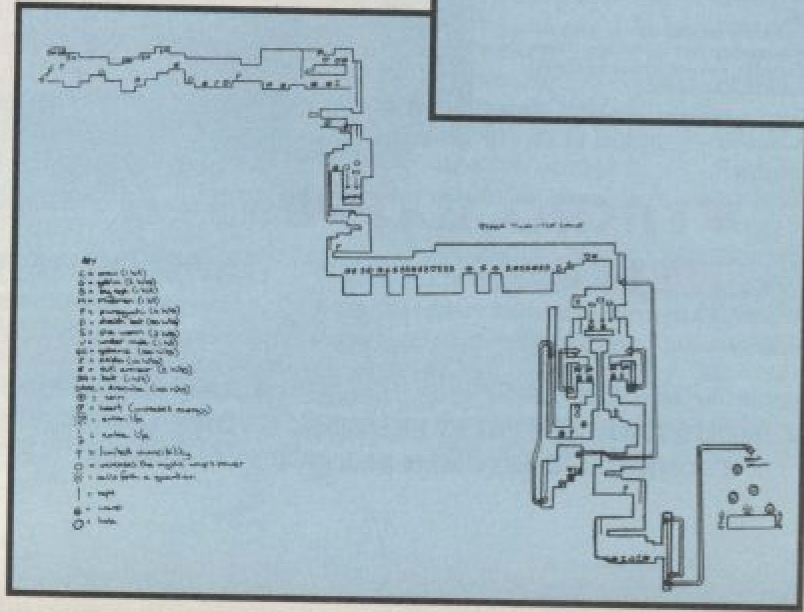


(1) Whip Punaguchi's first fireball.
(2) Wait until he opens his mouth then jump. You will hit his fireball and land on point 2; jump onto point 3 immediately.
3) Whip Punaguchi as fast as you can. Whilst doing this a fireball will fly over your head and onto your whip.

When you reach the protruding spikes stop and watch their movement patterns. Now move past them but don't get to close to the edge of the screen.

1) As Dracula lands on Drac 1 jump/whip him and land on point B.
2) Jump/whip him again and land on point C.
3) Dracula will now appear on Drac 3. Jump to the centre platform between points B and C. Make sure you are standing on the far right edge of the platform.
4) When Dracula appears on Drac 4 jump onto point F, face left, crouch down and whip him twice. He will now fire at you, so jump over his fireball and whip him twice.
5) If fang-face appears back on Drac 1 go through the whole process again. Should he appear at Drac 5 as a large bat and proceed to fly left and right, jump onto F, face left (make sure you are on the extreme right-hand side of the platform) and as the bat approaches whip him.





7) When Dracula stops in the middle of his left/right movement sequence prepare for a battle. He will release three bats at you: whip them.
8) When he stops just in front of you, jump/whip the three bats immediately.
9) Continue to jump/whip him as he flies past you, he will soon die. Now sit back and watch the superb end sequence.

GOING OVERBOARD

Curiously, board games have provided a steady stream of excellent and successful computer games during the Eighties. Perhaps it's not that surprising, though. They make a change from finger-blistering blasters and finicky adventures, whilst still exercising the brain. Sean Kelly checks out their history, the logic behind them, and rounds up some of the best available.

Board games have, in one form or another, been around for just about as long as man himself. Their popularity is universal, their appeal stretching across all cultures. Chess and its variations, Draughts, Go and Solitaire, have defied ageing, reaching back before any records were ever made.

They have gradually evolved from slow, taxing and fiendishly simple games into numerous variations suited to all types of player — and players. The old classics are still around, but games such as Risk, Monopoly and Cluedo now allow up to six players to slog it out in a battle of intellects.

Until recently, most popular board games had been about since the turn of the century, subsequently the board game market was fairly boring. Until Trivial Pursuit came along, that is. Literally revolutionising the market overnight, it injected new life into the computer game market, too, and spawned a thousand imitators. Most of them crap, but that's beside the point.

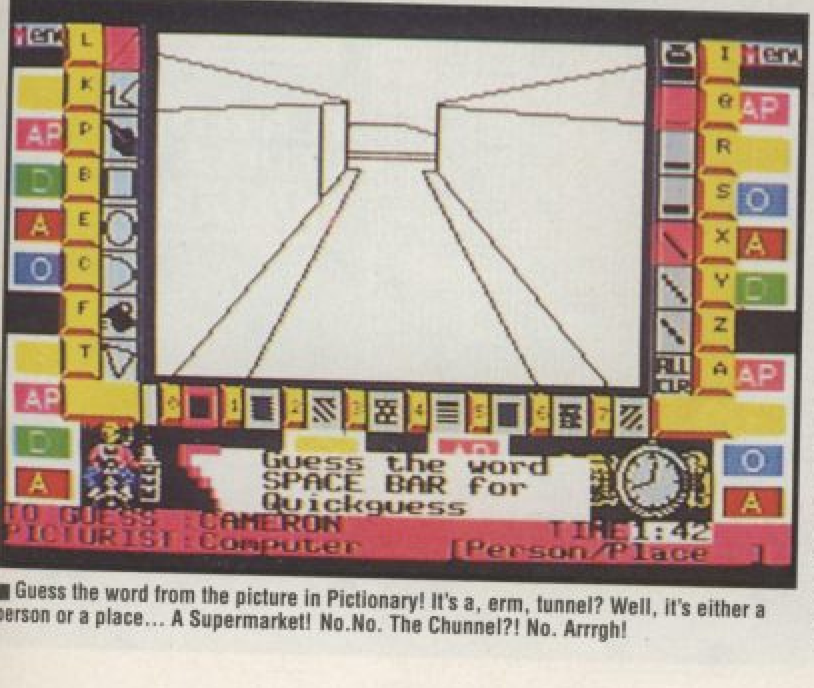
In an industry that can sell a game on the back of comics (*Viz*), music bands (*Frankie Goes to Hollywood*) and soft drinks (*The Pepsi Mad Mix*, if you will) it shouldn't surprise anyone that the massive resurgence of board games during the Eighties spurred software houses into action.

Of course, the first thing that anyone's going to say as you proudly show them *Battle Chess* on your swanky new Amiga is 'What's the point of spending 400 quid on a brand new computer just so's you can play a game you can pick up for a fiver down the toy shop?' Once you've treated them to your best 'Pah, computer illiterate. Don't you know anything?' look, you have to come up with an answer. Fortunately, it's a fairly easy one to find.

In each particular instance, the computer is being used in some capacity to enhance the gameplay of the original game. If you feel like challenging someone, you don't need to wait three weeks for one of your mates to feel like playing too. With a computer you have a challenger that won't argue if you decide to give up three moves from humiliation. It won't mind if you want to watch Neighbours for half an hour while you contemplate your next action. And you don't have to take over the living room setting up a massive board with several hundred tiny metal blobs and counters either. It's all done onscreen.



■ Full Metal Planete was once a strategy game on the boards. Infogrames took the involving concept and turned it into a well presented and playable computer game



■ Guess the word from the picture in Pictionary! It's a, erm, tunnel? Well, it's either a person or a place… A Supermarket! No.No. The Chunnel?! No. Arrrgh!

Even in the games like *Trivial Pursuit* and *Scruples*, where the nature of the game prevents the computer from providing a convincing opponent, it's being used primarily as a mediator. It's also being used to enhance the original game. Sound and pictures in *Trivial Pursuit*; in *Pictionary*, you didn't end up with little scraps of paper screwed up all over the floor.

Putting the personal convenience reasoning aside, I still find it incredible that my Spectrum, with its laughable memory, can thrash me to within an inch of my self respect at everything from chess to Scrabble.

UNDER THE BOARDWALK

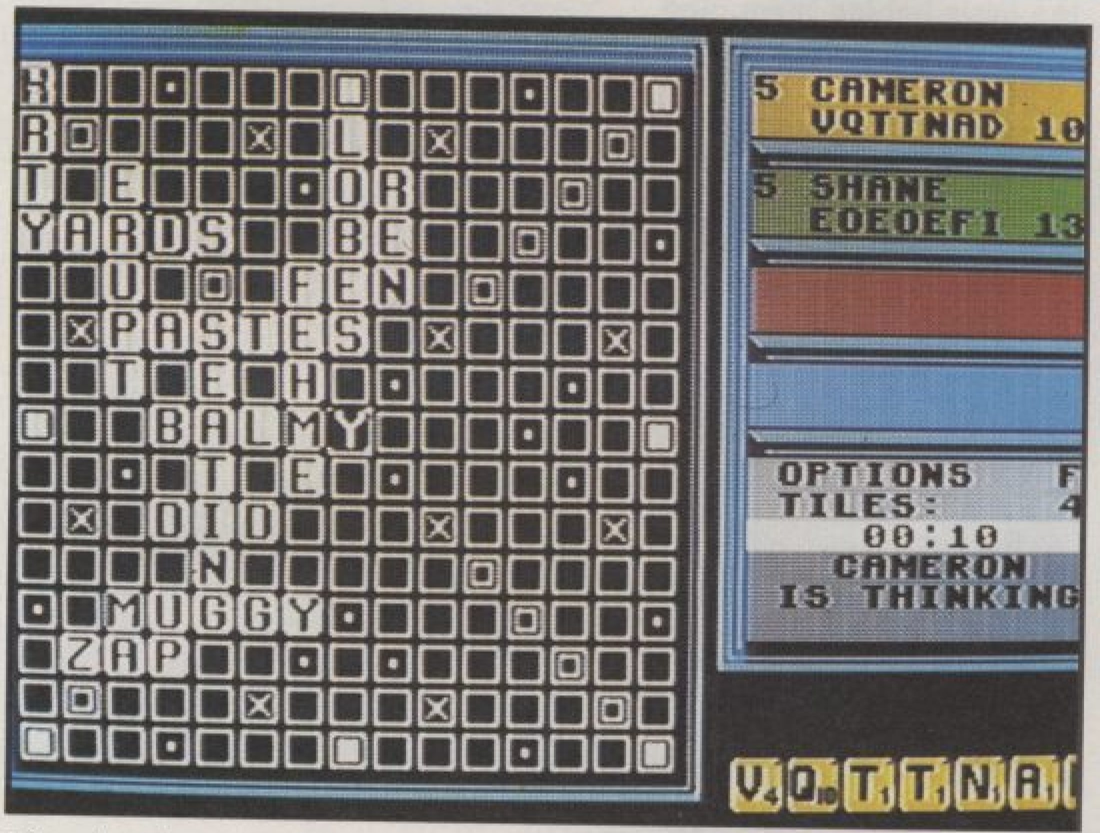
Rather conveniently, the various computer conversions fall into three categories. The first includes all the old classics, the games that have been around for centuries. Chess falls into this category, along with the many variations of Draughts and Go. The reasons that they hold an appeal for the various software houses is obvious. Firstly, they already have a massive international following, and secondly

DOMARK GETTING BOARD

Domark were one of the first software houses to realise the opportunities to be had in the board game conversion world. They hit the country with *Trivial Pursuit* over four years ago, and with half a million sales of that game alone have never looked back. Even so, board games were initially quite a risky market to licence. Mark Strachan of Domark justifies their dive in at the deep end: 'In *Trivial Pursuit* we were able to include graphic questions, using pictures. One that springs to mind was one which asked 'Who wears these glasses?' with a picture of the Two Ronnies' glasses. We also had music questions. Those playing a well known tune backwards were popular.'

So how do the games get from board to byte? 'With *Trivial Pursuit*, we spent a lot of time talking to, and meeting with, the inventors. They were involved from the word go. They would look at the games and say 'We like that, we don't like that,' and so on. So, when the product was actually finished, there was absolutely no question of getting approval.'

More board game conversions are expected this year, although Domark would not divulge any information.



■ Okay, okay — since when have Ren, Lobes, and Fehme been proper words? What? Since you've been cheating at Scrabble De Luxe? Hmmmm. Anyway, Leisure Genius's Scrabble is dead good, featuring everything the board game but far easier to cheat.

they were never 'invented'. As a consequence, there aren't any royalties to pay should you come up with a massive best-selling computer game (v. popular with aforementioned houses).

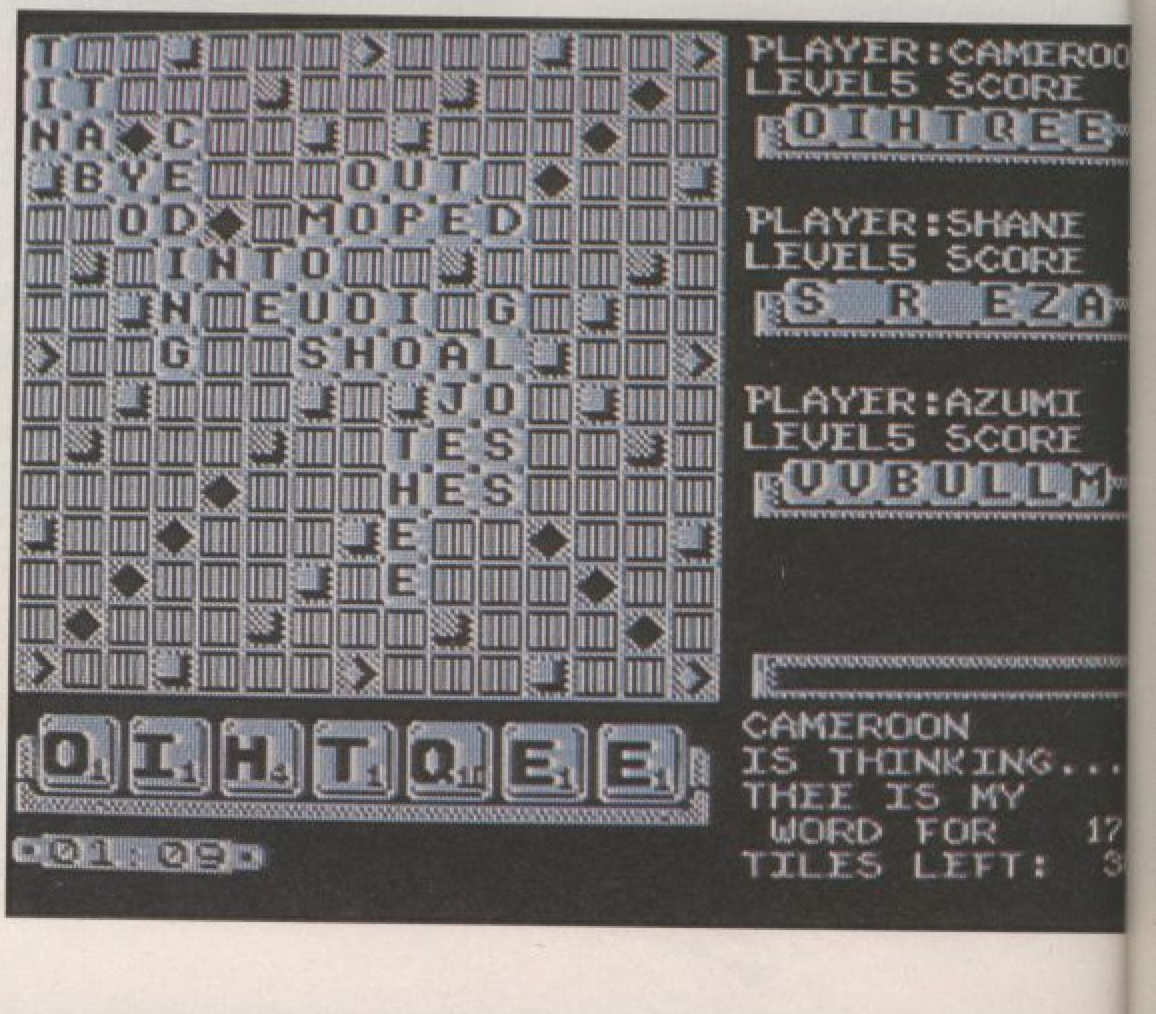
It's not just the old favourites that have been converted however, as there's also the new wave of board games. Stimulated by the phenomenon of Trivial Pursuit, board games for more than two players have had a massive resurgence during the Eighties. Just about every single idea that anyone's ever had for a board game has become reality in the last five years, and as a consequence we've had to suffer opportunistic dross like 'The Brit Quiz' and 'Pure Genius: The Guinness Board Game'. Fortunately, it hasn't all been substandard, and some of the better ideas have made it to the micro with a fair amount of playability still remaining. Amongst these we can include *Trivial Pursuit*, *Scruples*, and more recently the many versions of *Pictionary*, all courtesy of Domark. To this category we can also add old favourites such as *Scrabble*, *Monopoly* and *Cluedo*, popularised on computer by Virgin Mastertronic's Leisure Genius label.

Leisure Genius are also fairly prominent in the third group of board games, the ones which involve a fair amount of strategy. Games that fall into this particular group include the Leisure Genius title *Risk*, and other games that have a honeycomb of hexagons for a playing area as opposed to numbered squares. This type of game is still fairly rare on the micros, probably due to the daunting task of programming the computer with enough artificial intelligence to come up with a challenging game. I predict that we'll see a lot more of this style of game in the future though, as many will doubtless be spurred on by the quality and success of Infogrames' *Full Metal Planete*.

Undoubtedly, it's artificial intelligence that gives this style of game its appeal and challenge. In the majority of cases there's no need for stunning graphics or sound, simply an accurate graphical representation of the board and playing pieces involved. This leaves plenty of coding room available for the artificial intelligence.

HOW'S IT DONE?

So how can a computer, capable only of the most straightforward logical action, play chess so well that in some instances it's capable of beating a Grandmaster. Believe it or not, it's actually quite simple. It's down to speed. Chess is the most obvious game to pick to show an example, as just about everybody will be familiar with the game and the rules. Each game aim, or each action towards the ultimate aim of the game, will first be given a value. In chess, the highest value will be given to a check mate position, with decreasing values for the various priorities down the scale, with taking a pawn having a low value, and not taking any pieces the lowest. In its simplest terms, the



computer will be instructed to achieve the highest possible value over a given number of moves.

Each possible move can be seen as the branch junction on a tree. (See diagram.) Any move will result in a finite number of 'branches' or response moves, and each of these will, in turn, have a finite number of branches stemming away from them and so on, ultimately right through to every single possible game conclusion. When the computer makes a move in a game, it will first examine all the available moves that it can make, the best responses that the opposition player would make to them, the best reply from the computer to that move, and so on, after 'noting' the values assigned to any particular action.

Given no limitations, the computer could take this process all the way to working out the quickest way of finishing the game, and examine literally millions of different moves before committing to any particular move in the game. Whilst this might be fine if you have a few hours to spare, in most instances the computer will be programmed to examine a limited number of branches. Taking the example of clock chess, the computer will have a limited time to decide on a move, and so instead of searching through ten branches, in effect looking ten moves ahead, it will only examine the first three. (Limiting the extent of a search is the simplest way to make a computer chess game easy to beat, as the 'judgements' it makes won't be based on any forward analysis of the game.) In the limited time the game has, it will examine all the options available, and use the strategy which will generate the highest value over a given number of turns. If it comes up with two choices, one which will result in a pawn being taken, and one in which the queen is taken, then it will follow the one which has the highest value, in this instance being the taking of the queen.

The computer will also carry out a certain amount of pruning, ignoring any obvious 'silly' moves. For example, say the computer has been programmed to look forward five moves. If it already has a sequence of moves that will result in the removal of an opposition knight after three moves, then any other sequences might only be examined as far as the third move, and if they cannot equal the value of the given example, the computer will move onto the next branch without examining this particular branch in any depth any further.

Of course, the number of possible combinations of moves available even two or three steps along the chain are running into the thousands, but this is where the computer's strength will show. Even the slowest and most stubborn computer could have examined hundreds of possible moves whilst their human opponent is still trying to remember whether they are white or black. In this way the computer can, in the vast majority of instances, provide a formidable challenge to the human player. Recently, chess Grandmaster Raymond Keene was beaten in 12 of 59 games by a computer program. Admittedly, he won 40 and drew seven, but the results speak for themselves — in roughly a third of the games, the computer held or beat the Grandmaster.



■ Trivial Pursuit is a great game. Dig it out at your party when you want everyone to go home. Domark made it even easier to rid your house of people by publishing the computer version — hold the game pack in one hand and a computer in the other then shout (very loudly) 'Anyone for computer Triv?' and watch 'em run!

In other games like *Risk* and *Full Metal Planete*, whilst the actual results on the screen will be different, the logic will basically remain the same. Certain priorities will be established and given values, and by a process of examining the possible branches and the values they will reach over a given number of moves, the computer will decide on its strategy.

So successful have the various board games been, it's inevitable that they will continue to flourish on the home micros. In a marked departure from the more usual board game conversions, Digital Magic are promising an isometric 3-D version of Escape from Colditz for autumn. Doubtless there'll be more and more versions of chess for just about as long as there are computers, but I suspect that the next year will see more and more Dungeons 'n' Dragons style board games being 'blessed' with a computer incarnation.

After all, if it makes money, you can be sure they'll be a computer version of it.

THREE OF THE BEST

FULL METAL PLANETE
INFOGRAMES

(Originally reviewed: TGM028)
Usually, anything involving a hex map leaves me cold. though, after an hour or so of playing I was hooked. Despite the daunting and obvious 'French into English' instructions, it's easy to get to grips with and challenging. On top of that, Infogrames have done an excellent job in converting the game to the home computers. It's slickly presented with apt sound effects, and brilliant graphics.

This one will serve as an excellent introduction to those, like me, who find games with hexagonal playing areas a bit too ethereal and complicated. Recommended.

RISK
LEISURE GENIUS

(Originally reviewed: TGM029)
The computer version of the classic game for those of an imperialistic bent has been around on some 8-bit formats for ages, and has recently made it onto the 16-bit formats. Up to six players can take part, and the aim of the game is, put quite simply, to turn the world into your personal little empire. This is done by sending 'the lads', or 'Armies' as they are strictly known, into battle against neighbouring armies, and when successful, invading the defeated territory. Capturing an entire continent will grant the player a number of armies on his next turn and so on.

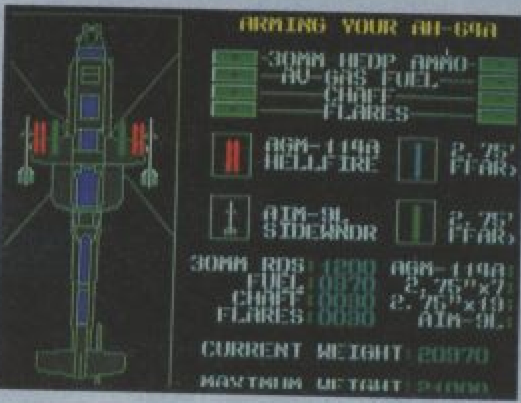
The computer-controlled players don't provide much of a challenge after a while, and it's not the most slickly presented game ever, certainly on the 16-bit versions. Nevertheless, it was a good game with a board, and translates well onto computer. There are loads of different game orientations, and using a computer does save all the faffing about that the board version involves.

SCRABBLE
LEISURE GENIUS

(Originally reviewed: TGM009)
The classic word game, where the aim is simply to build words up from the letters already placed on the board and your rack. On the 8-bit formats this one's been around for absolutely ages, and it is in fact out on a Leisure Genius compilation along with Monopoly and Cluedo. In this format it's well worth the readies, and even at the heftier price tag of the 16-bit versions it's still a challenge.

SILICON

There have been flight simulators around since computers first appeared. Whether you love 'em or hate 'em often depends on if you have the hours spare to appreciate them. Regardless, you can't have failed to notice increase in choice since 16-bit computers arrived. Ace fly-boy Paul Rigby takes over the controls, so prepare for some turbulence...



■ When MicroProse launched Gunship it caused quite a stir — presenting a series of structured missions with rewards for the successful.

Flights simulations have come a long way since the groundbreaking *Fighter Pilot* from Digital Integration or Cascade's *ACE*. Graphics have become realistic, sound effects atmospheric and most of all there's a *real* purpose to your flight.

The structure of flight simulations was, initially, rather aimless. The general thrust of any early 8-bit sim being to 'go out there and give 'em hell!'. This led to players wandering the gameworld with increasing boredom because the sim lacked any purpose.

The first revolution in game design appeared with MicroProse's *Gunship*. Here we had a sim with a series of structured missions as well as rewards (medals and promotions) for the successful. The flight model, although not as realistic as Digital Integration's *Tomahawk*, was realistic enough to add authenticity and credibility to the playable game design.

FLIGHT EXPLOSIONS

The next stage in flight simulation development coincided with the arrival of the Amiga and ST 16-bit explosion. Electronic Arts' *Interceptor* can be called the very first 16-bit flight simulation. Utilising smooth solid 3-D graphics, external viewpoints and reasonable sound effects, *Interceptor* furthered the boundaries of graphic realism. For the first time the F-16s and F-18s actually looked the part, rather than the abstract triangles we'd gotten used to in earlier simulations. *Interceptor* was criticised for its lack of realism. However, this decision to relinquish realism for playability proved popular and helped to established a niche market which has since been widened to accommodate MicroProse's *F-15 Strike Eagle II*, Vektor Grafix's *Bomber*, EA's *LHX Attack Chopper* and, most



■ The Bronco is just one example of the type of aircraft that could bring a splash of life to the simulation scene.

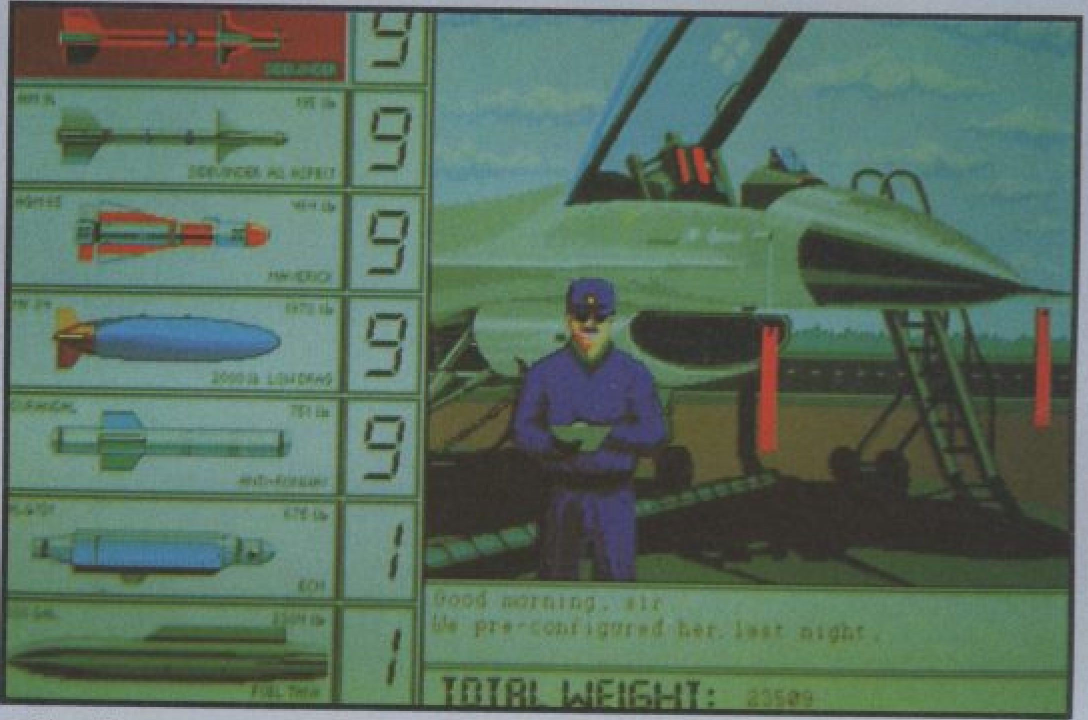
WINGS

recently, Epyx's *Snow Strike*.

Then came Spectrum Holobyte's *Falcon* and MicroProse's *F-19 Stealth Fighter*. They both took the classic *Gunship* principles to the limit. *Falcon* featured some excellent close-in dog fighting while *F-19* emphasising stealth as the priority, giving the player more than his fair share of tactical headaches.

However, it was not till the introduction of Digital Integration's *F-16 Combat Pilot* and the *Falcon Mission Disk* that designers began to notice the external factors — the simulation world, the enemy you are flying against, their artificial intelligence, and so on.

Probably the most important feature that reflected this new awareness of the simulation 'world' was the fact that missions you fly now are going to affect later missions. So if you destroy all of the SAM batteries around that important airbase, the next mission to hit the airbase itself will be much easier. Ocean's *F29 Retaliator* complements this attribute by having a battlefield which runs itself. The two sides of the



■ Falcon AT

THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

One, two, three, er... four, five. Oh sorry, I was just counting the flight simulations which have included the ubiquitous F-16. Too many is the final answer. But why has this been the case? Is this an instance of ignorance? Pure commercial considerations? The bountiful availability of data?

Well, it's probably a combination of all four, plus a few others as well. The F-16 can be used for a multitude of purposes. From air superiority to simulating enemy aircraft, and finally to the Wild Weasel (anti-SAM) proposal. It is one of the most numerous and well-known aircraft in the world: there are tons of books, figures and first-hand flight accounts readily to hand and, commercially, it is a safe bet. There are a few other aircraft which fit this category: the F-15 and F-18 for starters. The latest Lockheed F-117 Stealth fighter was subject to much press speculation. A perfect bandwagon, therefore, to throw a flight sim onto. Enter, stage left, MicroProse. Think of a helicopter simulator and the word Apache springs forth from the lips before you even know you've said it.

There have been one or two admirable exceptions to this state of affairs. Vektor Grafix's Fighter Bomber gave you plenty of aircraft to choose from — including the dated SAAB Viggen and ultra-sophisticated MiG-31 (albeit only an opponent). Electronic Arts' LHX presented the Russian plane and the Osprey to add a bit of life. EA's Chuck Yeager's Flight Sim also offered a good variety. However, the latter acted primarily as extra scenery. You were never meant to fully utilise each aircraft's special functions to the full.

Yet what about the hundreds of other aircraft? What commercial Bermuda Triangle have they fallen into and why?

The simulation market is in great danger of becoming stagnated (if it hasn't already). The general policy is to either simulate the new, the futuristic or the famous WW2 Battle of Britain aircraft. This has created an artificially small market which promotes repetition and results in boredom.

Flick through a sample combat flight sim. Notice the familiarity in the missions? Hit a SAM site, shoot down a MiG-21, hit a HQ, hit a SAM site, use your Martels to destroy that bridge/truck/building. Oh, and on the way back, destroy another SAM site. Yawn.

To promote more innovative missions requires more than the introduction of more and more sophisticated design techniques. It demands a change of aircraft and, if so, multiple flight models within the same program. Flight of the Intruder has included two complete flight models for the F-4 Phantom and the A-6 Intruder (gasp — a new, untried subject!).

Okay, you say, name a few alternatives. The Lockheed Hercules is an aircraft with character. Primarily built to be used as a medium transport, the Hercules has ultimately been used in a tremendously wide range of tasks. For example: transport, dropping paratroops, low-level insertion of special forces, gunship, low level pick-up of individual troops, tanker, coastguard, electronic surveillance and so on.

The Bronco is a prop-driven, light aircraft successfully used in Vietnam as a light attack aircraft, special force troop insertion, forward air controller (marking the spot for air strikes) and so on. The great benefit of the Bronco and other light attack aircraft — the Grumman Mohawk (action in Vietnam), the Cessna T-37 (used in Columbia for anti-drugs missions) — is that they fly down-and-dirty, close to the ground, giving the simulation programmers a chance to increase ground detail and incorporate more imaginative simulations.

How about a flying boat? In WW2, the Shorts Sunderland and PBY Catalina were credited with saving many downed pilots and shipwrecked victims from a watery grave, and blew up boats and other planes on their travels.

All it needs is a sparkle of imagination. The flight sim enthusiast will thank you for it, while the undecided will probably be intrigued by the novelty factor. I wonder how many sales are lost because the average games player sniffs at the news of yet another high performance jet simulator about to hit the market? Yet I can just hear that same person say, 'Hmm, I wonder what a Hercules is?' or 'A flying boat? Sounds like fun!'...

THE WILD SIDE

Flight simulations are fun. Yet they do have their serious side. They save money and, more importantly, they save lives. Flight simulations offer the only crashes you can always walk away from. Tactics can be practised and reactions sharpened at a fraction of the cost of flying the real thing.

Commercial flight simulators cost money, millions actually. You've seen them before, boxes of tricks strapped to hydraulics. They contain extremely powerful computers producing realistic weather effects (fog, cloud formations, even the correct tint to the sky!), offering thousands of light points to simulate just about any type of light effect, re-creating realistic and highly detailed ground objects such as trucks, trees, roads etc.

It would be nice to fly one of those things, wouldn't it? What would you say if I said that you could have already? Well, in a way.

Fort Rucker, in the United States, contained the very first graduate pilots to fly the Apache chopper. Apparently, MicroProse's *Gunship* was used in a psychology section to analyse a prospective pilot's reactions and situational awareness as he had to manage a variety of tasks while under fire. To what extent this system was (or is) used and whether it was used via a simple home computer is unsure. However, it is intriguing to think that home computer flight simulations can make the transference to the serious side of simulation.

However, probably the best example of this transference is Spectrum Holobyte's *Falcon* which has been expanded to form ASAT (Avionics Situational Awareness Trainer). Basically, Spectrum Holobyte's parent company in the States, Sphere, took the PC AT version of *Falcon* and, after working with a company called Perceptronics, produced a low cost flight simulator. The heart of the beast being an 80386 processor complete with two 80286 processors driving the multi-function displays. The cabinet holds a realistic reproduction of a F-16 cockpit complete with a central monitor which displays the HUD. However, even though you had a throttle, radar, etc, on the front screen was, basically, good ol' *Falcon*. The really saleable feature of this system, though, is it's modularity. Pull out the F-16 flight module, slot in a Tornado flight module and the simulation becomes a Tornado ASAT. Apparently there are modules for the F-18 and Mirage 2000 available. The system has even been shown at the Farnborough Air Show, the premier showcase for new hardware.

war fight it out whether you're there or not. Indeed, if you're passing over a raging tank battle and you want to help out the lads while you're on the way towards your primary target then go to it.

THE ULTIMATE FLIGHT SIM

But what constitutes the ultimate flight simulator? Currently, the ultimate simulation on purely technical merit has to be subLogic/Microsoft's *Flight Simulator 4* (*FS4*) which not only gives you a realistic Cessna 182 simulation but dynamic scenery featuring airborne traffic and ground features (yachts, etc). There's even an aircraft designer that allows you to modify existing program designs in any number of different ways.

With the exception of *FS4*, which is based in a civilian world, all of the other combat-based products mentioned above fall short of the ideal simulation. Why? Well let's take a look at what a flight simulation should try to achieve.

First of all the design offers the technical simulation of the subject aircraft (F-18, F-16, etc). This includes the full flight model complete with stall and G-force characteristics, rate of climb, etc. Okay, you've got your aircraft, but you need to make the game interesting.

You must introduce a game world or scenarios for variety. You present an enemy to offer a worthwhile challenge for the player's abilities. You offer specific targets, you give rewards for successful completion of the objectives.

Right. Is that it? For most flight sim designers, yes. However, talk to any RAF squadron commander and he will tell you that the most important part of an air force, the part that makes it a successful fighting unit, is not the quality of flying and not the pilot's ability to shoot down MiGs or hit SAM sites. The most important factor governing the success of an individual in combat is the pilot's role in, and devotion to, his squadron — teamwork. The principle of teamwork within the squadron and between other squadrons is the RAF's main aim. For it is the only way that high risk missions can be successfully completed with little or no casualties. Why on earth do you think the RAF stage ultra-expensive wargames on a regular basis? To encourage teamwork and produce a fighting force that will work as one unit in a time of crisis.

So, to describe any of the above combat-oriented products, which feature one aircraft versus the combined might of the enemy, as the 'ultimate flight simulation' would be laughable. At best, the present, second generation (*Falcon, F-19*) and third generation (*F-16 Combat Pilot, F-29 Retaliator*) flight simulations can only be described as 'situational awareness trainers'. That is, they are very good at educating you to be aware of the 'big picture'. Forcing you to look beyond the confines of the cockpit to the 3-D world you are flying in.

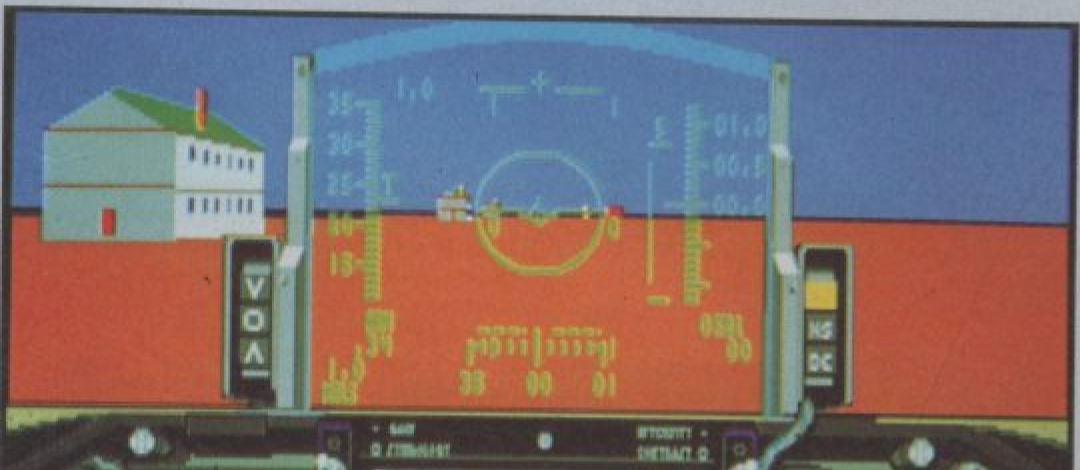
Of the above examples, only *F-16 Combat Pilot* even approaches the ideal flight sim with its squadron commander campaign, but not satisfactorily as you still fly alone.

However, there are three flight simulations on the market that do include this essential teamwork feature. Lucasfilm's *Battlehawks* and *Their Finest Hour* and Dynamix's *A10 Tank Killer* are, in my opinion, the finest examples of true military flight simulations on the market today.

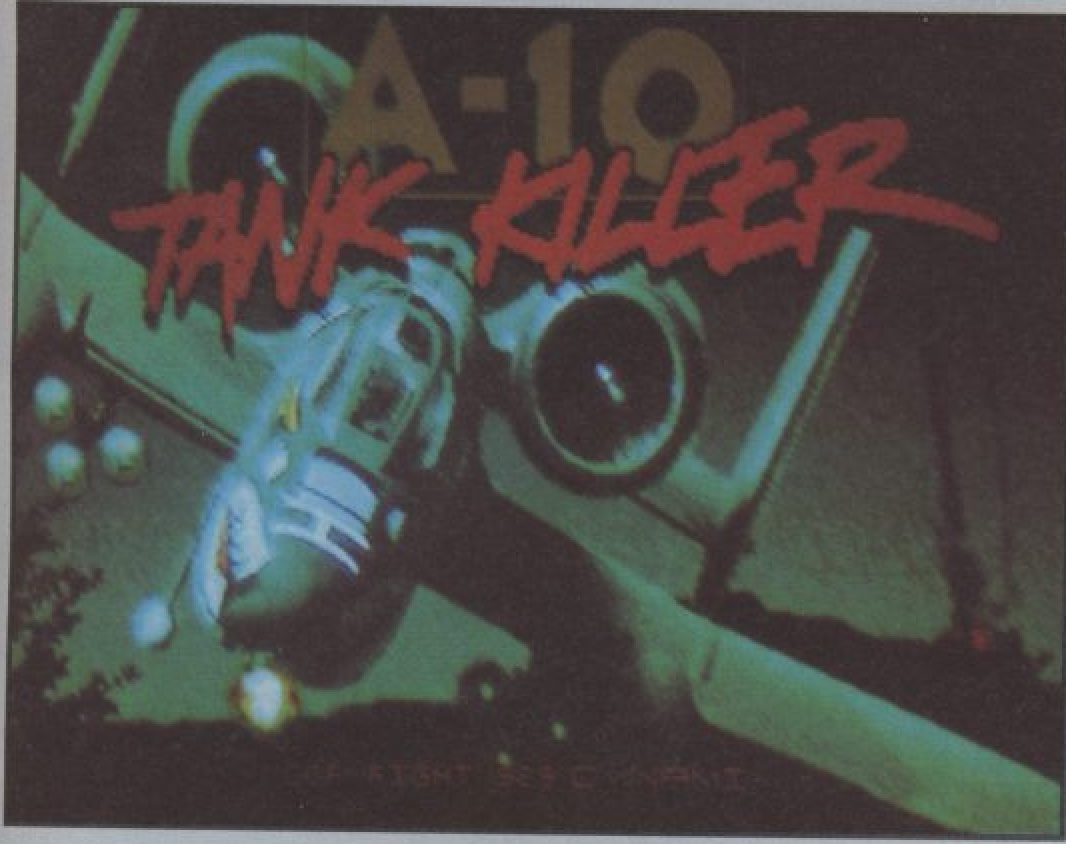
Although by no means perfect, each simulation contains enough technical merit to be taken seriously and each provides a challenging opponent with rewards at the end of each mission. *A10* and *Their Finest Hour* go further to providing a campaign game that involves planned progression. However, to varying degrees, all three sims contain the essential teamwork element that raises each program to new heights of realism.

How many times in *Battlehawks* did I think all was lost? Zero on my tail, another arriving on my three o'clock position. When, like the seventh cavalry, a colleague recognises that one of his fellow pilots is in trouble, blasts the guy on my six to kingdom come, allowing me to face the second Zero on more equal terms — that's teamwork, folks.

A10 introduces a unique 'radio chatter' feature which cuts in when one of your wingmen, or the Nav sitting in the back, are contacting you. The 'radio chatter' is totally intelligent to the relative moves and



■ The cockpit view from MicroProse's Gunship



is more about human skills, comradeship, strengths and frailties (physical and mental), mistakes, emotions, and the unpredictable Lady Luck.

Spectrum Holobyte's collection of *Flight of the Intruder*, *Falcon 3.0*, *A10 Warthog* and their as yet unnamed helicopter sim, and Dynamix's *WW1 Red Baron* are just some of the forthcoming simulations that include these important factors, as well as including the technical aspects that *A10 Tank Killer*, *Battlehawks* and *Their Finest Hour* lack. In addition, last month's interview with Spectrum Holobyte boss, Gilman Louie, introduced further design policies concerning the growing intelligence of NPC pilots, which not only ask you to deal with tactics but to also develop man-management skills.

Along with modem-to-modem and multi-player networks, the development of NPC intelligence will dominate the next batch of all-serious, fourth generation flight simulations. Amen to that.

THE RIDE OF YOUR LIFE

So what computer is the best platform for flight simulations? Without doubt this has to be the MS-DOS PC AT (as opposed to the slower XTs which are not really suitable for flight sims). For a start, many of the best flight simulations are initially developed for PCs (*Their Finest Hour, F-19 Stealth Fighter, A10 Tank Killer*, etc). In addition, the PC version of subLogic's *Flight Simulator* is the only active version available. The PC version has reached version four while other formats have not passed version two.

Many flight sims take advantage of the PC's excellent VGA graphic capabilities (256 colours onscreen at once) as well as the option for analogue joysticks and yokes that allow for more graduated movement when compared to the usual digital inputs of conventional joysticks. As well as the faster PCs (286 and 386) producing wonderfully smooth flight, there are signs that flight simulations are beginning to take advantage of the PC's specialist hardware. *Flight Simulator 4* uses the special 286 and 386 chip instructions and Spectrum Holobyte's *Falcon 3.0* will take advantage of a maths co-processor (more info in last month's Spectrum Holobyte feature). The upshot of the latter giving greater aerodynamic realism. Sound is being catered for with the growing support of soundboards. Most developers utilise the AdLib while other cards — Games Blaster, Roland LAPC-1 — have a growing support.

Further, there are various add-ons which have been designed with the PC in mind, but could easily be adapted to other computers if required. The MAXX stick (also available for the Amiga) is a yoke-type flight stick suitable for simulations with large or civilian aircraft (subLogic's *Flight Simulator* series, their forthcoming ATP air transport simulator and so on). Advanced Gravis have a more classic joystick giving the impression of a fighter-type environment.

However, subLogic have the ultimate set of flight controls — at the moment. Called *Flight Controls 1*, it comprises of a flight yoke, throttle and other switches such as a flap selector attached to a large control panel. A set of control pedals is also available. Although it hasn't been formerly introduced into the UK yet.

The one drawback to the PC? Price. A suitably-equipped VGA 386 PC with an essential hard disk will set you back around £2000. Although VGA 286 models are becoming more affordable at around the £1000 mark. Even so, that's still way above most people's heads. We can only hope that some sensible hardware company produces a cutdown PC AT with VGA graphics, built-in joystick socket and sound board for around £300-400 (dream on — Ed).

actions found in the hectic battlefield. So, if you fly too close to your wingmen (you can fly with up to two other aircraft), your flight leader might tell you to back off, he'll suggest course adjustments for the final run into the mission target, you may hear that one of your colleagues is under fire from a certain position, etc.

A10 also provides the sub-dividing of tasks. So you can take out grounded fighters, while two other A10s hit the SAMs and the radar respectively.

INTELLIGENT PLAYERS

Their Finest Hour gives you another feature which will surely constitute a major design element in future flight simulations: intelligent non-player characters (NPC) mixed with roleplaying. In *Finest Hour,* features include the creation of pilots, with each pilot (if he survives) improving with experience. They also have their own favourite manoeuvres and you can transfer individual pilots to different air bases.

The immediate future sees teamwork constituting a major role in forthcoming flight simulations. War is not so much about an F-16 being able to pull nine Gs. It



■ **Created in the States, Lucasfilm's Their Finest Hour featured intelligent non-playing characters**

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OUR MAN IN Japan

Still recovering from the news that Accounts have turned down his claim for Kylie Minogue tickets as a 'legitimate expense', Shintaro Kanaoya updates the hand-held scene and throws in a free lesson in Japanese...



Konnichiwa (as we say Japan). After last month's incredibly sketchy details on the Neo-Geo I have the full (ish) story for you this month. The Neo-Geo is another console computer, except for the fact it won't go on retail sale proper. True, you may see some shops down the old Tottenham Court 'prog and load' with the odd Neo-Geo and a bit of software, but not games in any quantity. And here's why. In Japan the machine is being sold primarily like a video recorder. You can either purchase the console (for around £250) or rent it. Then most of your software (like video cassettes) would be rented from game shops.

And believe me, this is a fierce machine. It can run programs up to 330Mb in length, similar to arcade games — in fact they *are* arcade games. Due to the producer SNK's direct involvement in arcade games already they've made the Neo-Geo compatible with most of their future releases. This means that, via a clever memory card system in the console, you can save a game at home and then continue in the local arcade. There's a plethora of software planned (some are already out): a baseball game, a mahjong game, a shoot-'em-up and a beat-'em-up. None of the games are under 40Mb, which can only bring them closer to the arcade originals. After all, on the PC Engine, with the exception of CD-ROM games, most games are written in just a few megabytes.



SEGA IN TOP GEAR

Details of the new Sega hand-held games machine are beginning to reach my ears. Following the Game Boy, Lynx and Handy PC Engine, the latest portable fun bundle is to be called the Game Gear. Its closest rival is the Handy PC Engine so let's see how they compare.

Well, physically it looks more like the old Game and Watches rather than any of the other three hand-



helds. Horizontally rectangular, it's bright blue and measures 103x210x38mm compared to the Handy Engine's 175x105x43mm. The Game Gear weighs 70g more than the Engine at a reasonable 570g. Although the colour screen is larger than the Engine, with a palette of 4096



colours, the Game Gear can only display 32 at any one time, while the Handy Engine can show 256 colours. Subsequently, the Gear's Video RAM clocks in at 16K, with the Engine at 64K. Sound on both machines is stereo, with battery power lasting for three hours.

Like the Lynx, both machines can be used in a multi-player network. But what makes the two unreleased machines much different from previous hand-helds is their ability to double up as a colour TV (of course, this probably won't be much good to my PALs in Britain).

Price for the PC Engine is still unknown, however the Sega will go on sale in Japan for ¥19800 (equivalent to £80). If the grey-imported PC Engines are anything to go by, you should see it on sale in the UK for around £150. Of course, with the imminent release of the Mega Drive, Sega take a more positive view to Britain than NEC, so you should see an official release (at around £100 I would guess) in 1992.

Where the hand-held PC Engine scores over all of the competition is in its ability to run all the present PC Engine home console ROM-card software. And, from looking at previous Sega 8-bit releases, you probably don't want them on your Game Gear anyway. This is obviously a shrewd move from NEC; they are guaranteed to have most of the existing PC Engine owners as forthcoming customers.

SHINNY'S SOFT SIDE

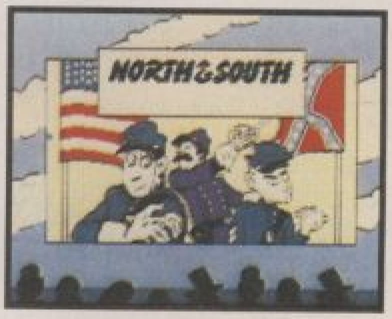
More and more foreign companies are entering the console software arena in Japan. I've been bemoaning the fact that Japanese designers have no imagination for ages, so it's a welcome sight to see the likes of Rare, Activision, Titus and Electronic Arts entering the market.

You'll be familiar with all their games. There are Nintendo versions of *Titan* and *North and South* from French software houses Titus and Infogrames respectively, and the PC Engine version of *Populous* from EA. The latter, being converted by Hudson Soft, is still in the early stages of development, but pictures I've seen look very impressive.

Keeping with Engine software, here's a rundown of the forthcoming releases. *The Legend of Momotaro: Turbo*, sounds very strange but has already been a hit Nintendo RPG and is based on a Japanese faery tale. It's already been made into numerous plays, films and comics, and as such Hudson Soft hope it will become as popular on the Engine as *Mario* was on the Nintendo. Indeed, there are already three more *Momotaro* games lined up: *Super Momotaro Railroad*, a board game; *Momotaro the Action Game*, an eight-level horizontally-scrolling action game; and *The Legend of Momotaro 2*, the futuristic sequel.

Those fully versed in the Japanese language will no doubt be overjoyed to hear news of a sequel to my favourite RPG, *Far East of Eden*, planned for release next spring. It follows the same pattern as the first — but with more scantily-clad women.

If you want a straightforward shoot-'em-up, you can't get more straightforward than *Xerious*. The arcade version first appeared in the early Eighties. The Engine version follows years later with nothing added, just simple, addictive, brilliant gameplay.



One of the best shoot-'em-ups ever created on any planet is *Star Soldier* on the Nintendo. And now my fave shoot-'em-up of the Eighties is to appear on the Engine, from Hudson Soft, under the name of *Super Star Soldier*.



Sadly, it looks too much like *GunHed*; pity they couldn't have left it as it was.

On the sequel front, *Varis III* gets a chance to make amends for *Varis II*, *Legendary Axe II* looks much like the successful original, *Rastan Saga II* follows in a similar vein, *Cobra II* might let you die in the sequel (making it a bit tougher than the first) and *Power League III*, is more baseball (nuff said). What was I saying earlier about originality?

On the Nintendo there's the sequel to the popular *Tetris*, the similarly Russian *Hatris*. It's by the same author and promises to be just as addictive. The game is based around stacking hats and then selling ones you don't need. Sounds original.

And on that happy note, I leave you once more. And till the next joypad-bashing installment, sayonara.



The ADVENTURE STRATEGY ROLEPLAY Column

Sad news this month as the greatest adventure house of them all closes down development. Paul Rigby sheds a tear but hopes the brains behind it will resurface soon...

INFOCOM DOWN AND OUT

The big news this month is the final closure of Infocom as an independent software development team. Infocom were bought by American giant, Mediagenic (parent company of Activision), in 1986 after Infocom's severe financial difficulties. Last June, Infocom's east coast offices closed as Mediagenic sought to transfer the label to its home on the west coast. Although the move kept Infocom going, it stripped the company of many of its star designers (Lebling, Meretsky, etc) who were not willing to make the trip. A couple of months ago Rob Sear, then head of Infocom, left the company leaving uncertainty as his position was never re-filled. The writing was already on the wall.

Mediagenic are now in financial difficulties themselves and Infocom's closure is just one of the factors in a drastic attempt to save the company from a sell-off. Sadly, it means that Infocom will now only be used as a 'label' and stuck on Mediagenic-produced 'storytelling software' — whatever that may be. It seems that such software will only be released on PC as Mediagenic regard this as the only profitable format. At the time of writing, the present Infocom team (in-house and freelance), such as veteran Marc Blank the co-author of *Zork*, author of *Enchanter, Deadline*, etc, remain as Mediagenic employees. The assumption is that they will be absorbed into the Mediagenic development groups. Products under development, such as the recently announced *Circuit's Edge*, will still go ahead.

As previously reported in the ARS news, Dan Bunten has defected from Electronic Arts to MicroProse, taking with him Modem Wars which will be released under the new title of *War!* The game, which will initially appear on the PC, is described as a fictional, strategic-level wargame and is enhanced with a novel inter-modem option.

FASA'S FORGOTTEN SECRET

Expect the third SSI game from FASA's Forgotten Realms series in June (PC, C64). In *Secret of the Silver Blades* players can advance their players to the 15th level. It'll be interesting to see how SSI cope, as the FASA game usually falls apart at this level when magic users become too powerful and unbalance the game structure.

Also from SSI there's an RPG called *Eye of the Beholder*, a series based on TSR's Buck Rogers licence, and a major US Civil War game. The Amiga version of *Champions of Krynn* is now available (on three disks). Sound and graphics are better than the PC version, with only a 1Mb version available at present.

Keep your eyes open for a new PC soundboard from Advanced Gravis. Called the M/Sound (around £200), the basic unit plugs into the parallel port (the Deluxe version is an internal board) and offers 10-bit, digitally-sampled sound running at 8Mhz giving four voices, plus MIDI and joystick ports. It is AdLib and Tandy TL compatible (so you get three cards in one), samples at five MIPS and gives CD-quality stereo sound. This card is one hot potato. However, it's only available in the States at present — sob, sob.

I recently received a letter from Mrs S Warwick of Bacup asking if I had any info on hint books for Scott Adams adventure games. Well, Scott Adams retired from adventuredom some time ago and his games are no longer published. I've never seen any hint books for Scott's products — although I'm happy to be proved wrong! You mention that you're stuck on *Pirate Adventure* and *Mission Impossible*. They must be very early copies because the name of the latter was changed to *Secret Mission* soon after release due to a copyright clash with the popular TV series. As you don't mention any specific problem I suggest you write off to Adventure Probe, 67 Lloyd Street, Llandudno, Gwynedd LL30 2YP. Editor Mandy Rodrigues may be able to help you further, as well as selling you a wonderful adventure magazine for just £1.50.

Conversions this month include three ST games. SSG's *Gold of the Americas* (£24.99) is an excellent strategy game of rampant imperialism — the 1Mb version includes extra graphics and digitised sound. Conversely, the thoroughly grot-

ty *Chronoquest II* has arrived amongst stifled yawns. Strangely, though, it is far more playable than the Amiga version. The design is tighter, with no misplaced messages, and the active screen areas have been slightly tidied up. Nevertheless, these improvements do not save this hopeless case. The last of the trio is Accolade's *Third Courier* on three disks (too many threes for my liking). A second drive (and third, probably) is *definitely* recommended.

Electronic Arts have PC conversions of SSG's *Fire King* and *Decisive Battles of the American Civil War Volume 1* (both £24.99). *Fire King* requires 640K but offers improved graphics over the C64 original. As does *Decisive Battles* which also has a detailed breakdown of your forces and an updated performance indicator amongst other goodies.

PC and Amiga versions of SSI's WW2 strategy game *Storm Across Europe* are out, as is their Amiga version of the addictive, fantasy-strategy game *Sword of Aragon*.

Well, that's it for another month. Keep those queries and quibbles coming in. And, till next month, watch your six and stay frosty.

PAUL RIGBY, TGM, NEWSFIELD, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1JW.

PC £29.95

TRACON/ RAPCON

Wesson International/Mindscape

GOLDEN SCROLL

After promising so much in the March issue of TGM, I hoped *TRACON*, the air traffic control (ATC) simulator, could deliver the goods. And it has duly obliged.

Granted, graphics are hardly spectacular, but what do you expect for an ATC sim? You'll see different airports, the sweeping radar beam, VOR radio beacons, as well as the actual aircraft icons which display present speed, current altitude, etc. Handy features such as time acceleration and a zoom function ease gameplay and help relieve the cluttered effects of multiple aircraft all onscreen at once.

TRACON is best played with a mouse. This allows you to zoom around the screen instructing pilots on what to do, avoiding other planes, and not wasting time and fuel by keeping aircraft on the tarmac for too long — and subsequently out of your already crowded sky. Of course, pilots are sometimes subject to human error and it's up to you to rectify their mistakes (without taking out too many other aircraft in the process). It's like a great juggling act... with aeroplanes!

Commands are simply executed through either keyboard or pop-up menus. On issuing commands don't be surprised to receive a garbled reply from the aircrew. Funnily enough, through the PC speaker — with its own built-in static and interference — the digitised speech sounds quite lifelike.

A variety of options, such as varying numbers of aircraft, differing pilot skills, changeable weather, malfunctioning aircraft, etc, all add to the value. In addition Wesson have produced a variety of scenario disks, including the Western US, Central US and Eastern US. I had the European Sector Disk for review which includes London, Paris, Munich, Athens, Rome, Brussels and Amsterdam as flight sectors. Each scenario disk includes that sector's own special characteristics and problems.

RAPCON, on the other hand, takes the military approach. Designed in a similar fashion to *TRACON*, *RAPCON* has you moving the likes of F-14 Tomcats and B-1 bombers around the sky.

I was impressed with Wesson's *TRACON* and *RAPCON*. Although possibly daunting at first, with a little practice both simulations soon get you into the swing of things. Both products are unique and well worth seeking out.

STRATEGY 91%

PC £24.99

BALANCE OF THE PLANET

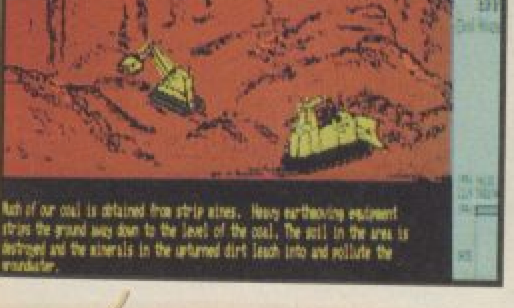
Accolade

As High Commissioner of the Environment for the United Nations you must put the world to rights: sort out the problems of pollution, CFCs, starvation, disease, acid rain and so on.

The tools of your trade are the powers to tax (oil production, logging, beef production, etc) and to grant subsidies to deserving causes (solar energy, family planning, etc).

However, before you do anything you will need to study a bit. The heart of *Balance of the Planet* is a large database full of interesting facts and figures on the causes and effects of the world's problems. For example, select the *results* option from the pull-down menu and you will see the full range of plus and minus points which accrue after you have made environmentally good and bad decisions.

If you click on one of these points, say *skin cancer*, you will be taken to the skin cancer screen with illustration and an explanation of the causes and effects of skin cancer, along with its deaths so far. Click on a cause, eg *ultra-violet light*, and you'll be taken further into the explanation with more info on UV light. You can go on like this for ages. The database is very educational, successfully teaching you how complicated, interconnected and, therefore, how balanced the world is.



The program is designed more as a teaching tool than a game because, once the database has been viewed, each session only takes a short time to complete. In addition, you have relatively little to actually do. A bit of taxing here, a subsidy there, and that's it. After nine short turns the game is over. *Balance of the Planet* would be an ideal product for schools and colleges — educational, easy to use, quick to play — but game players looking for a challenge should perhaps look elsewhere.

STRATEGY 73%

PC £24.95

WOLFPACK

Novalogic/Mirrorsoft

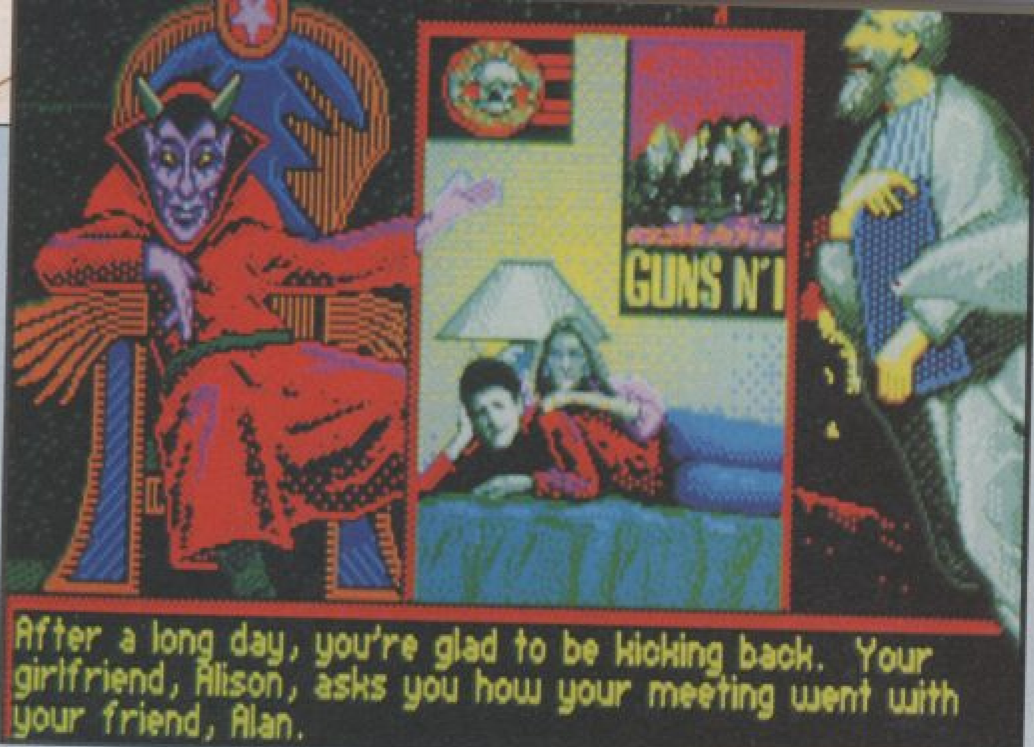
In *Wolfpack* you command either one or more German submarines or Allied surface ships. The game is centred around a number of missions set within the 1939-45 period. The significance of the time period being that during the war you will be able to take advantage of numerous upgrades both in torpedo and ancillary equipment.

The most important feature in *Wolfpack* is the ability to work as a team — an essential element as most of Germany's submarine success came through this group tactic. A range of captains (all with different characteristics: relentless, cautious, etc) control the fleet of subs, although you can assume direct control of a sub at any time. A similar option is available for the destroyer captains. However, you can give general orders to captains such as *anchor, shadow* and *patrol*.

Graphics are excellent, especially in VGA (similar to *688 Attack Sub*) with AdLib and Soundblaster soundboards supported. They add to the atmosphere giving the usual submarine-type sound effects of radar pings, explosions, etc.

Wolfpack is the most technically advanced submarine simulator on the market today, by virtue of its multi-captain feature alone. It would be nice to see this taken further for a sequel — bringing role-play elements more into the design, for example. My only gripe is that, even with the excellent mission builder, I missed a campaign option (as seen in MicroProse's *Red Storm Rising*) which would extend gameplay. Nevertheless *Wolfpack* is an excellent learning tool for wolfpack/destroyer group tactics.

STRATEGY 86%



PC £24.95

ESCAPE FROM HELL

Electronic Arts

Escape from Hell wasn't designed to push the boundaries of RPGs, it was simple programmed to be fun.

The scenario is the depths of hell itself. You have the task of rescuing your friend Alan and your girlfriend from the murky depths. Using an *Ultima*-type viewpoint you wander the levels of hell. When you enter a city the scale changes.

Not all NPCs are dangerous. In fact it pays to chat a while. Sometimes they offer information, objects or amusing speech. When they do, an animated picture of the character appears. On other occasions a character will offer to join your party. You can have two party members and you'll certainly need them, as the monsters tend to roam in groups.

The main attractions to this game are that it is humorous, 'alternative' and a little risqué in parts — but in no way offensive. Weapons are varied, from a sleep grenade to an uzi. Rather unlikely weapons to be found in Hell, but never mind!

Although *Escape from Hell* is nothing to shout about, it can still be recommended as it exhibits a fair sprinkling of puzzles and some nice design touches with an interesting scenario.

RPG 78%

Amiga (also PC) £24.99

NUCLEAR WAR

New World/US Gold

Nuclear War can be summed up in one word — satire. Basically, you control a country and have to compete with other world leaders using every means at your disposal (propaganda, nuclear strikes, etc). The object of the game is to be the last surviving player. The opposition are biting caricatures of world leaders old and new (Tricky Dicky, Ronnie Raygun, PM Satcher, etc), and each has their own character traits, such as warmonger or pacifist.

Starting the game on equal, neutral terms you can build bombers, warheads and defence. However, as well as the opposition you'll encounter natural (and unnatural) disasters such as earthquakes, nuclear meltdowns, flying saucers, flying cattle (nuclear mutants!), rampaging space cadets and rogue 16-ton weights which flatten people indiscriminately. Throughout the game you'll have to keep an eye on your population as they influence your building power. Cities will vary in size depending on your situation and progress.

Nuclear War should not be dismissed as taking the 'bomb' issue too lightly. Rather, it conveys the futility of the whole thing. The gameplay is addictive as the opponents can be a handful. Recommended as light relief for serious wargamers and anyone who's after something different.

STRATEGY 80%

IT'S CHAMPION

COMPETITION

After many months of negotiating, untold hours of frustration and fingernail biting, I have pleasure in presenting for your delectation, the very first ARS-hosted competition (TA DA!).

To kick it off, what better than SSI's fantastic *Champions of Krynn* (reviewed, praised, adorned with Golden Scrolls, etc in last issue). There are 24 first prizes (12 PC and 12 C64 versions) coming to you from sunny Birmingham and glossy US Gold. Second prize? Erm, well we haven't got one. Why? Because TGM only gives away first prizes, that's why (phew, that was close)! But now (drum roll) the questions.

(1) What is the name of the hideous beasts created, via the Dragon Highlords, by corrupting the eggs of the good dragons?

(2) What is the name of the evil Goddess, also known as the Dark Queen or the Queen of Darkness?

(3) What does SSI stand for? (And, no, I don't mean human rights and free speech.)

Just scribble the answers, along with your name, address and computer format (yes, some people forget to put the obvious), on the back of a postcard and send it off to **NEWSFIELD, TGM, CHAMPIONS OF KRYNN COMPETITION, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1JW.** Closing date for all entries July 20. ...You've never had it so good.



PC £24.99

SORCERIAN

Sierra



Sorcerian is not a Sierra product but a licence from the Japanese software house Nihon Falcom. The story goes that Sierra's Ken Williams visited Japan, saw the game, and liked it so much that he bought the company, er, licensed the game.

It is described as an RPG with arcade action sequences. A difficult brief to implement and one which *Sorcerian* doesn't quite pull off.

The basis to the game lies in three scenarios. Within each scenario are five subquests, each becoming progressively harder. You are presented with about 60 high-quality tunes which form the background music. No sound effects are given but AdLib, Roland and Game Blaster soundboards are supported.

The RPG side of the game is quite impressive. Characters experience the ageing process (eg male fighters grow beards as they age) which affects their abilities, also male and female characters each have their own particular advantages.

Once you have created your characters you can give them an occupations. There are 60 available, from nurses to fighters, hairdressers to blacksmiths. In addition to an income, each character's occupation will have a long-term effect on their abilities.

Religion also has a direct effect on your chances of success. Fail to pay homage to the temples, pray regularly or not go to confession and you might just regret it when you want to be resurrected by a priest.

Sadly, the arcade action section is just an average side-scroll, platform, arcade game with some pretty graphics and pernickety controls. This method of roaming the surroundings doesn't gel with the role-playing framework. A half-hearted attempt.

RPG 57%

PC £29.95

DRAGON STRIKE

SSI/US Gold

SSI have the dubious honour of producing the world's first dragon flight simulation. Based on the Dragonlance book series, the game follows the classic flight sim design principles.

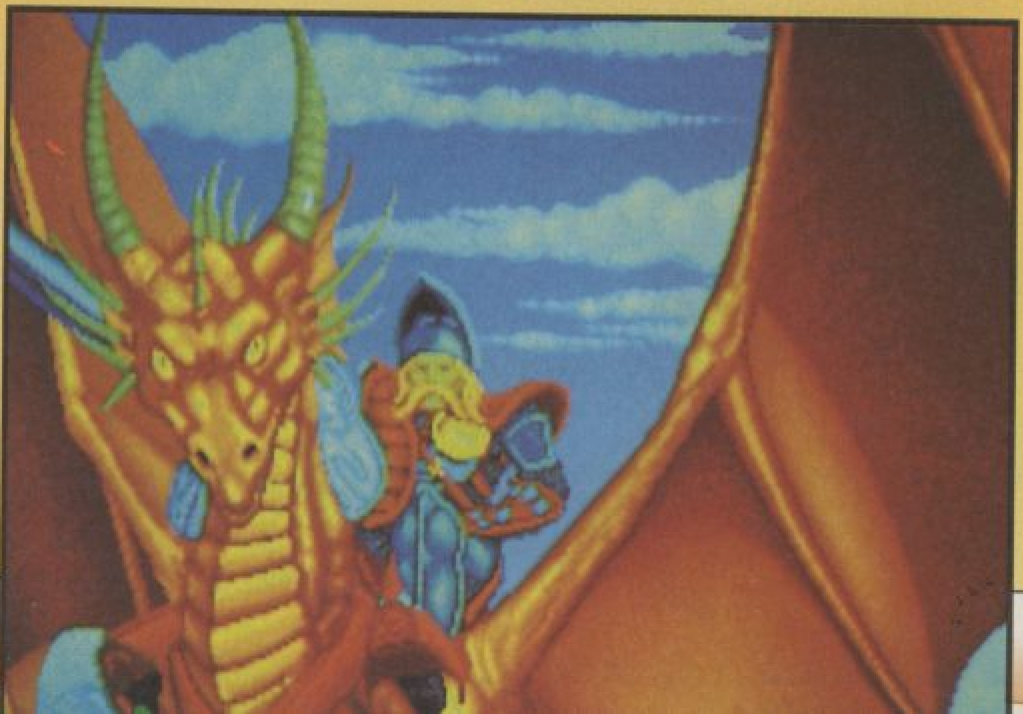
The flight screen shows the head of your dragon (upgradable to more powerful beasts) plus your lance. Other offensive and defensive weapons include dragon's breath (two types) plus any magic items gained via successful missions. The screen also shows a crystal ball (radar), height/pitch indicator, and a number of bar indicators showing the amount of breath your dragon has left, speed, power and hitpoints for both you and the dragon.

You play a solamnic knight, whose orders form the basis of the rank system. Ranging from the initial Order of the Crown up to the Sword and finally the Rose. Higher orders give greater rewards and prestige but also greater difficulty.

The opposition comprise of different dragon types and sub-families, such as wyverns. Each have their own favourite weapons: claws, poisonous bites, etc. Graphics are a mixture of 3-D polygons and bit-maps. You can also vary the amount of detail presented — handy for slow PCs.

I thoroughly enjoyed *Dragon Strike*, it takes SSI graphics into another league. If you have a liking for flight sims you should immediately buy this game. It provides a lasting and well-balanced challenge coupled with the usual skills that a 3-D tactical flight simulator normally demands. Then there are the unique aeronautical quirks offered by dragon flight. *Dragon Strike* is also recommended for the RPG addict as it gives a whole new dimension to the Dragonlance story.

STRATEGY 85%



WHAT NOW?

By 'eck, have we got a bucket full of hints and... oh, ugh, wrong bucket. In this bucket over here we have umpteen hints, tips and very sensible words of wisdom all scrunched into little paper balls, torn into various pieces and covered in tea and sticky sweets. *Dbase*? Who needs it.

Typhoon of Steel
C64

A little bit of help in this deep, if rather slow, wargame from the lads at SSI. Sometimes the Japanese, instead of routing, call upon the ol' banzai attack. When this happens to you, turn massive indirect fire upon them and then hit them with small arms fire. Always make sure that you have a few squads taking good advantage of cover and concealment specifically for the banzai tactic.

Wasteland
PC, C64

The copter is only a one-off ride, you'll need high agility to fly it too. Then again, as you can walk anywhere you wish, is it really necessary? Sorry, but you won't be able to enter Darwin Base until you've visited Sleeper Base, which means you'll have to travel the sewers.

Heroes of the Lance
ST, Amiga, PC

Keep the mage and Goldmoon in the front line so that they can do their stuff. A few tips on how to attack the following fearsome, frightening, ferocious, erm... things.

Baaz Draconians no problem.
Giant Spiders swing your sword downward to them.
Trolls charm or hold, then hit him.
Gully Dwarves easy meat.
Wraiths charm and hit them quickly.
Hatchling Black Dragons use Deflect Dragon Breath then hit their legs and lower body.
Khisanth the mother dragon herself, who is so large and deadly she'll have you gibbering on the floor in total and utter terror. Next question...

Sentinel Worlds 1
PC, C64

Mining is not worth the effort. Chugging around in your ATV to pick up three types of ore takes valuable time and effort. Silly, really, as it brings little dosh for your labour. When boarding ships don't forget to use projectile weapons and then raid the armoury which is always in the same place. Grab the haul (especially the tessalator) and then sell the lot. Incidentally, the strange items, such as the arisian lens and holophones, may be pretty looking but they're pretty useless too. Sell them.

M1 Tank Platoon
PC

Don't forget, your support elements are expendable — so use them! If used correctly, the air, artillery and infantry can turn a battle for you. Use smoke early and often — it gives you instant cover, especially over flat terrain. Be careful when using artillery support, though. They will fire at a target until their mission is complete, subsequently they are not as mobile as you may wish. Don't rely on them for covering fire. It's better to utilise artillery off map to destroy targets you may encounter later on.

Drakkhen
Amiga, ST

If your team are 'outside', feeling a bit fragile, hard day at the office, gasping for a large G+T, and then a rather large and nasty monster turns up and asks when the next bus is due — just press the return key. You will automatically do a half-turn. The next phase of the operation is known as the Monty Python Strategy — all you have to do is Run Away!! Run Away!! etc.

Manhunter
Amiga, ST, PC

Listen, I can be cryptic when I want to be, you know. Take the video game in the bar, for instance. If you're having trouble with this, remember, less is more. Puzzled? Good, ha!

Hero's Quest
PC, Amiga, ST

There is no way inside the goblins' cave, so don't waste your energy. Fighting goblins is only useful to increase your attributes. Similarly, there is no way into the *front* of the Brigand Fortress. The wizard is only a source of info, unless you're a mage, but don't forget to take cover from his bad jokes! Forget locked doors, unless you're a thief. You can also forget the troll, unless you fancy a bit of treasure. Careful, though, he's a tough cookie.

Bard's Tale III
C64

Come on Interplay! What about the rest of us poor saps (Amiga, ST and PC owners) with the first two games? What about a conversion for us, eh? Anyway, if you're having trouble obtaining a rainbow rose in Lucencia, have you seen anything else which may have been rainbow coloured? Zer is a connection. For those of you having problems handing out flowers, the bard's song at the hall will help.

Leisure Suit Larry II
Amiga, PC, ST

If actually starting this game is the main problem then remember that honesty is not always the best policy. Incidentally, for the more experienced players out there, the spinach dip is for points only.

Ultima V
ST, PC

Food is a big problem at the start of the game, mainly because stealing is a no-no. So, just keep your party small and sell non-essential items till you get going. You could hang around bridges and take a stroll at night to find a few monsters to kill. Have your most intelligent character do the buying and selling. If there are any beginners out there who still can't find the dungeons, look in the mountains for little piles of boulders.

Battles in Normandy
C64

If your units have taken a bit of stick, pull the casualties out of the line pronto and put them into reserve. In the Omaha beach scenario, watch your armour. Save it for when the Germans break out of the beachhead and are attacking in the open. Up until that point keep your armour in reserve. When you are attacking, check out the enemy's support formations (about two hexes away). If there are quite a few of them it is probably wiser to probe his defences before throwing your forces at him. Conversely, if you can't see support formations, let him have it!

Stuck? Stumped? Stumbling? Stomped? Stoned? Stuck? (Er, used that one.) If you have any queries, quandries, quibbles or unsolved quests, write to the master of mystical magic and guardian of the TGM treasured trail tips at NEWSFIELD, PAUL RIGBY'S HELPLINE, TGM, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1JW.

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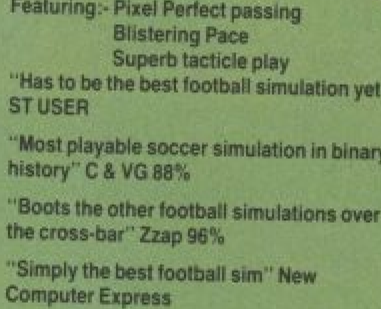
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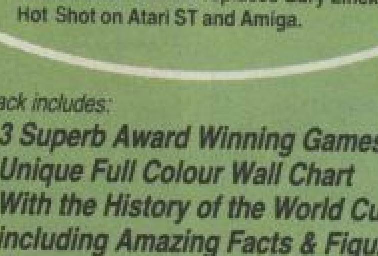
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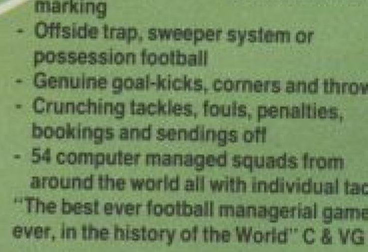
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LETTUCE PAGE

Lettuce have it! We want to hear your views on anything that gets your goat, rattles your cage or grapples your grapenuts. This is your open forum for discussion on all things computerwise. Pick up a pen and write to: NEWSFIELD, TGM LETTUCE LEAVES, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1JW. And remember, there's a £50 prize for the best lettuce, erm, letter every month!

OH NO!

Dear TGM
Why aren't there MSX letters on your readers' page any more? I personally thought it was quite amusing to see old Anonymous plodding through his ten-word vocabulary, trying to boost the non-existent sales.

What exactly is an MSX and what's wrong with them? If they are as pathetic as Mel Croucher seems to think then how can they produce a game better than the C64's *Denaris*?
Kenny S F Brains, Chorley PR7 2JB.

MSX is (was?) a computer standard devised by a few Japanese companies (Sony, Yamaha etc) by which all their computers are (were?) designed. It was supposed to solve all compatibility problems, but it only confused the buyer even more. To find out more move to Spain (see Correspondents).

WHY %?

Dear TGM
Hi. First let me congratulate you on your new look. Brill! It's amazing! The screenshots of *Golden Axe* make buying a Mega Drive obligatory. Now to the point: ratings. No, not moaning and complaining, just a question or two.

I've been in the games biz since 1981, but one thing still seems odd. Ratings out of ten are quite simple to establish, but you (and several other mags) use the percentage system, which is confusing. Rating out of 100 appears to be somewhat out of the air. For instance, how can reviewers choose between 79% to 81%, or maybe it's 84% after all? You get my point? These 1%-2% differences are weird. Please explain how Mark, Robin and Warren do it (rating, of course!).

Star Players are a similar case. 85% awarded *Lost Patrol* one, but *Golden Axe*'s 92% were fruitless.

I now rest my case. A truly happenin' new look you have there, friends. Just give us a regular coin-op column (you are a games mag).
Lior Meiry, Haifa, Israel.

Marking a game on a percentage basis is very important — especially when you're marking between 60% to 80%. For example, a game may play well and on that basis it would score, say 70% or if you had it your way, seven. But what if the graphics and sound are really good? That adds a few extra percent, but not always enough to make it a round eight/80%. Of course, if we marked out of 1000 it would be totally stupid.

Star Players are for games that receive 85% and over, but sometimes the art department are so happy with the page they've designed they think the SP award would spoil it (that's what they tell us, I reckon they just forget to put it on!).

NOT GUILTY!

Dear TGM
Thank you for printing my open letter to Richard Branson in issue 30. As you can see from Virgin's standard reply, all they do is replace the name and address each time they send this insane letter out. Obviously, I was all wrong to blame Virgin Mastertronic, they are completely without blame in this matter (and every other matter by the sound of it!).

Manufacture: not guilty! Design: not guilty! Pricing: not guilty! Delay: not guilty! Safety:

SCREENSHOT SCAM

Dear TGM
I am a disappointed Amstrad owner. The influx of the awful games lately is beginning to get me down. *Garfield's Winter Tale* is a classic example. On the back of the sleeve there are screenshots of nice colourful sprites, and as I know (from good games) that the Amstrad is capable of this and I didn't think The Edge would insult Garfield I purchased the game. Only to become bitterly disappointed when it had finished loading. The graphics were monochrome and the sound effects sparse and crummy!!!

Why is rubbish like this allowed?! I have better budget games! Oh, and why is software often converted straight from the Spectrum, when the Amstrad clearly has higher capabilities? There wasn't even an indication of the screenshot's format on the packaging, however, if there was this can is misleading as the packaging should fairly portray the version you are about to buy. I have encountered this on so many games: *Knightmare* and *Out Run* to name a couple. Unless something is done an awful lot of people will be deceived.
Clayton Wellman, Southampton.

An age old problem. Software buyers have been crying out for years for packaging to show screenshots of each format, not just the prettiest ones. These days, software houses generally just produce one set of packaging for all formats and place an Amstrad (or whatever) sticker on the side to save on production costs.

IMPROVED AMERICAN AFTERBURNER!

Dear TGM
In TGM030, I read about *Afterburner* on the FM Towns and you stated that 16-bit conversions of *Afterburner* were disappointing and unplayable. I have to agree with you on that. Activision insinuated, by showing 'actual screenshots' in their advertisements, a different-from-the-ST-and-much-better-looking Amiga conversion. The actual conversion was just a ST port-over. A great disappointment to me, because *Afterburner* is my all-time favourite coin-op.

Now, I have recently seen and played the American Amiga conversion of *Afterburner*. It is completely reprogrammed, featuring the original screen layout, much better graphics and animations, better soundtracks (although no speech), much more playability and is fun to play. The graphics are sometimes even impressive!

It was programmed by Weebee Games with music from JC Brooks and is sold in the US through Sega. I wrote this letter because I think this is very unfair to us Europeans and I want JUSTICE!
Michael de Rvitex, Holland.

Justice and a good Amiga conversion of Afterburner*?!*

FASTER THAN YOU CAN SAY SEGA

Dear TGM
I would like to voice my opinions on the console market. I have a Sega Master System at the moment and I was totally happy with it until I discovered that the Sega Mega Drive was a lot better. I only purchased my Master System nine months ago and already it's outdated! Okay, so the system is really about two years old but I felt so sick when I saw the stunning graphics of *Super Shinobi*, that I decided to sell my old Sega through the classifieds. Not only did it not sell but I didn't even get one caller? This must mean the no-one wants a Sega and soon it will be like that with the Mega Drive. Then the scandal came up about Mega Drive compatibility *[official UK Mega Drive software won't work on grey-imported machines]*; all those poor Mega Drive owners being left high and dry, with hardly any games.

The console market is developing so quickly that as soon as you buy a console it immediately gets outdated and you feel very peeved, like me. Now, I'm all for new technology but this is ridiculous. Just as you are splashing out £200 you wish you had bought some other console. Even so, congratulations to Sega for producing another winner, but slow down a bit, please?

James Morris, London NW7 2RA.

not guilty! Incompatibility: not guilty! Recent (threats) ads: not guilty!

So those *bad* Japanese are the ones who are to blame? They are putting Richard into a position where he will be forced to sell the Mega Drive and games at an inflated price (compared with Westlake in Hong Kong) and will have no choice but to isolate the people who own those nasty imported machines.

What a load of nonsense, this story would bring tears to a glass eye!

Chris Norris, Manchester M9 3BT

CORRESPONDENTS

■ ***Want to know what's going on outside the UK? Let Richard Munden from Cadiz in southern Spain give you an idea of their software availability.***

■ Up until 1986 the price of 8-bit games was comparable to that of the UK, £7.95 and upwards. However, this year 8-bit titles were sold for four or five pounds. 16-bit titles started at £10 for a game, with multi-disk games and complex simulations costing around £20.

Presently, the most recent titles (*Operation Thunderbolt*, *Hard Drivin'*, *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*, *Full Metal Planete*) can be bought from small local computer shops and have also been introduced into the national branches of a popular supermarket. At £10 a game these are understandably selling like hot cakes, on all versions.

The MSX is one of these versions. Relatively unrecognised in the UK, the MSX has almost all major releases available for it over here. These include *Chase HQ*, *Power Drift*, *Test Drive II*, *Batman*, *Turbo Out Run*, and *Op Thunderbolt*; hence MSX owners are well supported, perhaps more so than C64 owners. So all MSX owners coming to the Costa for their holidays would be well advised to bring lots of money to fulfil their temptations!

Hasta la vista amigos, adios!

LETTUCE OF THE MONTH

with Ernest K Periwinkle

JULY: LAKELAND LETTUCE

Lovely bit of weather we've been 'aving. Fair and stable, just right for lettuces. This month we're taking a good look at one of me favourite varieties: the Lakeland. Being one of them Iceberg types, this large lettuce seems to positively thrive here in Britain — what with our climate an' all. Tightly packed white hearts is what yer getting, and yer best sowing time is between May and October. Good thing is, the Lakelands are a hardy lot and can defend 'emselves against disease and, best of all, against root aphid (little buggers, if you'll pardon me). An' there you 'ave it for July, more allotment fun next month.

READER CLASSIFIEDS

WANTED

Wanted to swap, quality utilities, tools, programs for graphics, sound, etc,. maybe even superior games. Ray-tracers, artists, designers, for the latest, 100% replies, write to PO Box 33116, Takapuna, Auckland, New Zealand. Amiga only, of course.

FOR SALE

Sega Megadrive PAL, plus three games Golden Axe, Altered Beast, Ghouls and Ghosts, worth £300. Will sell for £200. Phone 081 943 2056 after 1pm.

C64c, 1541 MKII disk drive, datasette, Neos mouse, Quickshot joysticks, Hush printer, paper, leads, £400 worth of cass/disks games. A bargain at only £320, worth over £1000. Contact Mark on 0282 411702 after school hours.

Amiga games for sale, all originals, including Chase HQ, Operation Thunderbolt, Strider, Xenon 2, Barbarian 2. £9.99 max. per game. Send SAE to Lee Woolley, 90 Mill Lane, Ryhill, Wakefield, West Yorks. WF4 2DR.

Amiga, few months old, still boxed, £200 worth of original games incl. X-Out, Kick Off, Power Drift etc., also two joysticks, mouse and stereo speaker system. Worth £700, sell for £375. Ring (0634) 245248 Kent.

PEN PALS

PC penpals wanted to exchange games, tips and more. Write to: Olafur Eliasson, Urridakvisl 25, 110 Reykjavik, Iceland (Island).

PC contacts wanted. Write now!!! To: Skuli Sveinsson, Flokagata 67, 105 RVK, Iceland.

MISCELLANEOUS

Amiga cheat disk issue four filled with cheats and tips including Space Ace, Black Tiger, Op Thunderbolt etc. Price £3.50 or send issue 3 disk and £1.50 to Mr J.S. Smith, 45 Maplecroft Crescent, Sheffield S9 1DN.

The Games machine

NEXT MONTH

BILLIONS OF BLUE BLISTERING BARNACLES, ME HEARTIES! THE GOOD SHIP TGM SETS SALE ON JULY 19. DON'T MISS THE BOAT, 'COS ON BOARD YOU'LL FIND...

NEO-GEO
In-depth review of SNK's explosive coin-op console. A palette of 65535 colours with 4096 colours onscreen; three programmable sound generators, four FM channels and seven pulse code modulators; a 68000 and Z80 for processing (but does it play a mean game? — Ed). You'd better believe this machine plays a mean game (oh, right — Ed).

TGM TAKES OUT THE TRASH
Find out how you can turn into a pan-dimensional refuse collector and clean up the multiverse with Micronet's interactive on-line game, Trash.

COMIC BOOK LOOK
Prepare to meet the Swamp Thing, Punisher, Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles, Invaders from Home, Silver Surfer, Hulk, Green Lantern, X-Men and more in TGM's comprehensive classic comic round-up.

CONSOLES IN COIN-OPS' CLOTHING
Dig deep into many arcade machines and you could be in for a big surprise. No multi-layer PCBs and no processors pulsating in parallel, instead just ordinary home computers and consoles.

PLAYING ON THE MOVE
Luxury trains, planes and automobiles could soon be sporting the latest in compact entertainment systems. TGM takes a ride into the future.

■ PLUS ■
Best of Budget 1990 ■ Exclusive review of *Escape From Monkey Island*! ■ *Gauntlet III* on the Lynx ■ Sensational CES report ■ Pixel painters ■ All the hottest summer game releases

ALL DEPARTMENTS ***Newsfield, The Games Machine, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW (0584) 875851.*** *EDITORIAL* **Consultant Editor:** Richard Monteiro **Deputy Editor:** Richard Eddy **Sub Editor:** Dominic Handy **Staff Writers:** Robin Candy, Mark Caswell, Warren Lapworth **Editorial Assistant:** Viv Vickress **Photography:** Michael Parkinson *PRODUCTION* **Editorial Director:** Oliver Frey **Production Manager:** Jonathan Rignall **Production Supervisor:** Matthew Uffindell **Design:** Ian Chubb **Reprographics:** Robert Millichamp, Tim Morris, Jeni Reddard, Robb Hamilton **Systems Operator:** Paul Chubb *ADVERTISING* **Group Advertisement Manager:** Neil Dyson **Ad Sales:** Sarah Chapman, Jackie Morris *(assistant)*. **Administration Assistant** Joanne Lewis **Group Promotions Executive:** Richard Eddy **Mail Order:** Carol Kinsey. *Subscription rates available from main address.* Designed and typeset on Apple Macintosh II computers running *Quark Xpress* and *Adobe Illustrator 88*, with systems support from Digital Print Reprographics, Wirral Business Centre, Merseyside. Colour origination by Scan Studios, Islington Green, London N1. Printed in England by **BPCC Business Magazines (Carlisle) Ltd**, Newtown Trading Estate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA2 7NR — a member of the BPCC Group. **Distributed by Comag**, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex.

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UNCLE MEL'S TRIVIA QUIZ

1) How many digits are displayed on the *Ghostbusters II* logo?
2) Name any three out of the four lands in Imageworks' *Theme Park Mystery*.
3) How old is Dan Dare, who first drew him and what's the opposite to his name?
4) How many West Midlands police witnesses does it take to program a computer?
5) How many PCs (the machines, not the West Midlands kind) are being sold each month in the UK: over 5,000, over 50,000, over 500,000?
6) 'There is a sixth dimension beyond that which is known to man...' are intro words to which sci-fi classic?
7) Which daily national newspaper can also be picked up on a normal TV aerial and read via a computer for blind people?
8) Which is the odd one out: telephone, computer, photocopier, fax, printer, monitor?
9) Disney Software are about to release their first Mickey Mouse computer title. Within two years, when was Mickey born?
10) What's the real purpose of the steel pipes for the Iraqi 'Supergun'?
11) What's the maximum reward offered by ELSPA's Crime Line for anyone grassing on software pirates?
12) Access/US Gold have just released *Heavy Metal*: put the following metals in order of weight, starting with the heaviest: iron, plutonium, gold, lead.
13) Which software houses can be found in these Italian directions for World Cup fans: Ram Glands, To A Brit Moron, Si Arslik?
14) What was unusual about the deep space sabotage in the 1981 movie, Timewarp?
15) Electronic calculators use alphanumeric displays based on a combination of seven segments. When and where was the system invented?
16) What was revolutionary about the Whirlwind-1 computer built in 1947?
17) Before becoming a software house, where did the name Gremlin originate?
18) Apart from the All Formats Computer Fair, where would you encounter Sucker, Spitter, Bubbler and Whomper?

ANSWERS
1) 11, eight fingers and three toes.
2) Dream Land, Dragon Land, Future Land, Yesterday Land.
3) 40, Frank Hampson, 'Up 'ere!'.
4) Two; one to program and one to corrupt the data.
5) Over 50,000.
6) The Twilight Zone.
7) The Guardian.
8) Photocopier, it's the only component not included in the new Canon S-2000.
9) 1928.
10) To fire TGM editors.
11) £1000.
12) Plutonium (94), lead (82), gold (79), iron (26).
13) Grandslam, Romantic Robot, Krisalis.
14) The saboteur was a computer.
15) 1450 BC, Phoenicia.
16) It used magnetic memory storage.
17) World War II air force slang for a glitch in a fighter plane engine.
18) *Typhoon Thompson*.



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